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every step in their career, and leaves little more to be desired in the way of sound advice. The treatise cannot be too strongly pressed on the rising generation. It will act like a faithful friend and mentor in many of the difficulties that must inevitably beset their path. The work on "FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS" is a healthful and useful Manual for all who are called on to lead in such assemblies. Their history is narrated in terms of much interest, and will repay careful study. We can imagine that, during times of religious excitement, this sober, wise, and thoroughly practical production, will be of essential service. If good, but sometimes unwise people would be guided by its counsels, there would be greatly less of the froth which so often rises to the surface, and greatly more of solid and lasting benefit to the Church.'—*Northern Whig*.

'The substance of these volumes is spiritual truth, addressed to the members of Christian churches, such as we would expect an apostle or prophet to announce, if he had appeared in our time, and were to speak to men and women in the language of everyday life. Whoever desires sound theology and wholesome gospel instruction, will find both in these volumes. The truths explained and the precepts inculcated, seem to us well adapted to build up Christians in knowledge, and in faith, and in holiness. Any man in search of what is called "Modern Thought" will find none of that poor stuff here. Here we have no chaff, but the finest of the wheat; no tinsel ornament, but gems of Bible gold; no fancies and no vagaries of the human imagination, but the grand old truths which have nourished the faith, and formed the creed of every generation of the saints. Dr Houston is, in fact, a Puritan divine, speaking to us in the language of the nineteenth century, but combining with it the intellectual activity, the doctrinal purity, and the fertility of the seventeenth. . . . We congratulate the venerable divine, as he approaches the close of a laborious and useful life, that he has been privileged to see his writings cast into a form, which will not only introduce them to circles where they have been hitherto unknown, but hand them down to other times. That they will meet a favourable reception from every devout and intelligent mind in all churches, so far as they are able to reach, we cannot for a moment doubt. Serious people could not provide themselves with a better companion on a Sabbath afternoon. The works of Dr Houston do honour to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, of which he has been so long a minister; and they deserve to be classed with those of Rutherford and Haliburton, Addison and Boston—men whose writings have done so much to form the religious sentiment of Scotland and of Ulster.'—*Londonderry Standard*.

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Its Nature, Ends, and Obligation.

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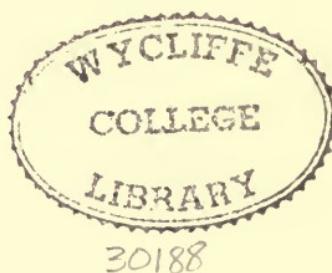
ITS NATURE, ENDS, AND OBLIGATION;

AND

Mode of Administration.

BY

THOMAS HOUSTON, D.D.



EDINBURGH:

JAMES GEMMELL, 15 GEORGE IV. BRIDGE.

1878.

C O N T E N T S.

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ERRATA.

For Chapter VIII., p. 232, read Chapter X.

For Chapter IX., p. 239, read Chapter XI.

Some other slight Errata, which have occurred through the Author's distance from the press, can be easily corrected.

INTRODUCTION.

THE necessity of full instructions on the nature of the Lord's Supper, the doctrines and duties connected with its observance, and the great ends which its institution contemplate, has been felt and acknowledged in the church in all past ages. This appears from the numerous works, both ancient and modern, theological, controversial and practical, that have been emitted concerning it. The catechisms and directories on the sacrament of the Supper—of greater or less size, would of themselves form a considerable library of pastoral teaching ; and not a few of them will always be of permanent value to the youth of the church in leading them to make due preparation for sealing a public profession of Christianity ; while from the proper use of such manuals, even advanced Christians may derive edification and comfort.

It is not to be wondered at that there should be in existence such a multitude and variety of works on the great ordinance which was appointed by the Founder of Christianity, in the most solemn and affecting circumstances, to perpetuate the remembrance of His death, until the time of His second coming and glorious appearance. None of the institutions of our holy religion bring more vividly into view the glory of the Saviour's person—the perfection of His atoning work, and the preciousness of His offices—His matchless condescension, and the endearing relations which He sustains to His redeemed people. There is none in which are more fully displayed the church's high and honourable privileges, and in which are enforced, by more powerful and constraining motives, our obligation to cultivate with the whole household of faith the fellowship of brethren—to shine as lights in the world—and to live as heirs and expectants of the heavenly glory.

As the ordinance, moreover, is designed to be the great standing monument to attest the fundamental *fact* of Christianity—the death of Christ for the redemption of the world—to present in embodied action an epitome of the chief doctrines of the religion of Christ—and to be the means of conferring eminent spiritual blessings upon the faithful, it is of the last importance that its distinctive character should be clearly

exhibited—the obligations to observe it taught and enforced by scriptural motives—the due qualifications for approaching to it, diligently inculcated, and the privileges to be enjoyed in connexion with its faithful administration fully set forth.

The perversions and corruptions of the Lord's Supper, arising from the enmity of Satan, the old Serpent, against the Saviour and His truth—the pride and ambition of ministers of the church—and the ignorance, unbelief, and ungodliness of the world began early, and have continued in various forms till our own day. Justly has it been observed, that there is no ordinance that has been so marred and perverted in apostate and backsliding churches, so as to present the vilest caricature of Christ's original institution, or that is more liable to be dispensed and observed for low unworthy ends. Yet is there cause for abundant praise and rejoicing, that, through the singular favour of the church's glorious Head, the sacrament of the Supper is still administered, in many instances, with as much simplicity and purity as in the apostolic age, and is accompanied with like evident tokens of blessing.

The chief object of the following Treatise is to present a clear scriptural, though not exhaustive view of the Lord's Supper in its diversified aspects—as a testimony of great value for precious truths—as the means of enjoying distinguishing privileges, and as in its faithful and diligent observance, designed in coming ages to promote in a much higher degree than in the past, the revival of true religion, the church's unity and faith and love, and the universal prosperity of the church of Christ. During a somewhat lengthened ministry, in which he has sought, and to some extent realized, the blessing from above in the administration of sealing ordinances, and in which he has regarded as his highest privilege on earth, the enjoyment of near fellowship in such ordinances with brethren in Christ—many of whom are now in glory, he aimed to study with some care, guided by the light of the Word, the nature of the ordinance in all its parts—to give special instruction to those who were admitted to it—to vindicate it against prevailing abuses and perversions—and to urge continually upon the members of the church their solemn responsibility to exhibit in fruits of righteousness the salutary effects of spiritual dedication. A number of the most godly elders and members of the flock to which it was the privilege of the author to minister, urged him to give to the public some

portions of the instructions which he tendered in connexion with the administration of the seal of the covenant. Several distinguished brethren also in the ministry, in whose judgment he had all confidence, a considerable number of years ago, concurred in recommending him to prepare and issue a work on the Lord's Supper, somewhat after the manner of the author's *Practical Treatise on Baptism*; which, while setting forth fully the scriptural doctrine of the institution, would contain suitable *practical directions* for its administration, and be adapted to give expression to the experience of faithful witnesses for truth, and of believers, who have the seal and earnest of the heavenly inheritance. For a number of years, these requests from brethren, who had peculiar claims to be heard with high respect, were revolved occasionally in private, without any definite purpose formed to carry them into effect—through a sense of the importance and greatness of the work proposed, and the difficulty of finding leisure from pastoral and other labours for executing it in a becoming manner. Brought now, through the singular favour of that blessed Master, whose he is and whom he desires to serve, to life's evening period—and near the close of half a century of pastoral labour, the author has, after some serious thought, been led to regard it as his duty to issue, among his last works for the exhibition and defence of the Saviour's truth, and the edification of the church, this doctrinal and experimental Treatise on the sacrament of the Supper. The aim which he has sought to keep steadily in view in the preparation of the following Treatise, was to present a comprehensive exhibition of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, as it appears in its primitive institution and in apostolic practice; and as it is held forth in the symbolic books of the purest Protestant churches.

In a number of important particulars, the ordinance is treated of in aspects in which it is rarely contemplated in modern treatises on the subject—such as when the church is regarded as a covenant-society—and the sacrament is considered a seal of the covenant. The necessity of unity of faith and practice is, besides, insisted on in connexion with its administration and reception; the duty of pastoral training and discipline; and the fruits of sacramental dedication, are, because of their intrinsic and relative importance, discussed with some fulness. Perversions of the sacrament—Romish—Lutheran—and Anglican, have been deemed deserving of special, careful consideration; and abuses

which have of late been spreading throughout various sections of the Protestant churches—arising from the formality, worldliness and relaxed discipline of modern times, appeared to demand specific notice. All care should be taken to dispense the ordinances of the house of God in strictest accordance with scriptural principles. The abundant effusion of the Spirit may alone be expected in connexion with a clear display of truth, and with entire subjection to the supreme authority of the church's exalted Head.

In treating on the perpetual obligation of the Lord's Supper, it has been deemed important, not only to discuss the leading positions of the *Society of Friends* on this subject, but likewise to advert to a practice which, in recent years, has been spreading in Presbyterian churches, especially in America, by which numbers who are connected by profession with the church, and are admitted to other ordinances, refrain habitually from partaking of the sacrament of the Supper. The views advanced in relation to *frequency of communion*—the times devoted to preparatory services—terms of communion—and *simultaneous partaking*, may to some appear novel. While the author offers them—after a somewhat careful examination of scripture testimony, and of the sentiments of many eminent lights in the church, with the conviction that they are deserving of serious consideration, and that their general adoption would be beneficial, he submits them with much diffidence and humility, desiring that, in these and other matters, the unerring guide followed should be the law and testimony left in Israel.

As a chief design of this Treatise is to furnish to ministers, elders, and members of the church, a Scriptural Directory for the administration and observance of an ordinance which so fully reflects the Redeemer's glory, and which is so intimately connected with the increase of faith and hope in the people of God, the author commends it to the prayers of brethren in Christ, throughout the different sections of the church. Should this humble attempt be owned by Zion's King, in any measure, to preserve from neglect and perversion the institution that commemorates His dying love, and to minister direction and spiritual comfort to any of Zion's travellers, he will enjoy an abundant recompence of reward.

TREATISE ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH A COVENANT-SOCIETY.

THE dealings of God with the human family have ever been in the way of a Covenant. Wondrous condescension, and unmerited grace characterize all His dispensations. Promises of good are given—stipulations made, and conditions proposed, on the performance of which the promised benefits are enjoyed. This was clearly displayed in the Covenant of Works given to man in innocence. The first human being has been justly regarded as a Covenant-Head, or federal representative; for with him God made a covenant, including in its provisions all his natural posterity, and securing to him and them, in the fullest sense, life and its countless blessings, on the condition of his perfect obedience, during an allotted term of probation. The transaction on God's part was *most condescending*,—in His entering into covenant with a being infinitely beneath Him; and it was, at the same time, *most gracious*, in that He bound Himself, by an absolute promise, to reward the obedience of His creature; and inasmuch as the reward promised—eternal life to millions of the human race—vastly transcended in value one man's obedience. In the quaint but expressive language of some of the old divines, “there was much grace in the Covenant of Works.” The security was purely of God's sovereign favour, and man's endless felicity was guaranteed by a Divine gracious promise.

When, by abusing his liberty, man violated the compact, and forfeited the promise to himself and his posterity, God revealed a way of pardon and acceptance, through a covenant of more extensive and glorious grace. The first promise given on the back of the Fall (Gen. iii. 15) clearly revealed a

way of deliverance from the curse, and of restoration to Divine favour. It proclaimed life springing from death, and blessings of the highest value to be enjoyed through substitutionary suffering and sacrifice—and these not the portion of individuals merely, but of a community gathered out of all nations, and existing throughout future ages. The woman's seed spoken of in the comprehensive promise, was not only the personal Saviour to come, but consisted, too, of all who were to be redeemed by His blood, and united to Him by a living faith. It is the Church chosen and called out of the world—a purchased, holy, peculiar people—designed to show forth His praises who hath called them, and to inherit all New Covenant privileges and blessings. From the date of this fundamental promise, throughout its whole history till the advent of the Messiah, there is abundant evidence that the church, gathered out of the world, was placed under special dispensations of God's covenant of grace. Thus was it in the age of the Patriarchs, both before and after the Flood ; and so was it likewise under the Mosaic economy—the dispensation of types, prefigurative of the higher, substantial blessings of the Gospel.

After the Fall, when true religion was diffused throughout the world among the descendants of Seth, those who professed it appeared as a Covenant-Society, separate and distinct from others—having ordinances as means of grace—under Divine special protection, and enjoying the fulfilment of gracious promises in all Covenant blessings. In the days of Enos, men “began to call on the name of the Lord,”* associating for religious fellowship, and the observance of ordinances, social and public ; and they were known and designated as the Lord's people, distinguished from others by peculiar profession and privileges.

The Covenant transactions with the ancient patriarchs, so frequently recorded in the Old Testament history, bring into distinct view a peculiar select society—the object of Divine favour—designated to eminent blessing, and distinguished by holy obedience. All these federal deeds were based upon the covenant of redemption made between the Persons of the blessed Godhead from eternity. Each of them was a discovery

* The original expression may be rendered, as in the margin of the authorized version, “Then began men to call themselves by the name of the Lord.” This would indicate that they appeared more openly as a separate covenant people.

or dispensation of God's Covenant of Grace, revealed by the Mediator, as the principal party to such as were taken into the gracious compact. None of these covenants were made with individuals alone for their own sakes, but they all had respect to *social communities*, which they were taken to represent. The Eternal covenant, containing absolute, free promises, was made with the Mediator and Surety on behalf of the elect. Contemplating *them* chiefly, it secures to them benefits and blessings of every kind, both for soul and body, and for time and eternity. The covenant-transactions recorded in the Scriptures have respect to the Visible church on earth, consisting of those who, in all ages and places, profess the true religion and their children. This society is called and incorporated by its exalted Head to profess His truth—exhibit its sanctifying influence—and to labour after the nearest conformity to the church invisible of real believers. Its privileges as a covenant-society are extensive and most valuable. It has the privilege of “being under God's special care and government, of being protected and preserved in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies—of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace by Christ to all the members of it in the ministry of the Gospel, testifying that whosoever believes in Him shall be saved, excluding none that will come unto Him.”*

The covenant with Noah, of which the bow in the cloud was the significant token and seal, guaranteed gracious preservation and providential blessing—not on the ground of human merit, but solely as the fruit of sovereign favour. While its outward benefits extended to the human race in general, it provided spiritual blessings for those who by faith, as Noah, “condemned the world and became heirs of righteousness which is by faith.” The covenant with Abraham was evidently a revelation of the covenant of grace, securing privileges the most excellent, not only to the Patriarch, but to his seed after him. In it God revealed Himself under gracious titles and in gracious relations. “I am God Almighty,” El-Shaddai. “I will be a God to thee, and thy seed after thee.” “I am thy shield and exceeding great reward.” It contained “exceeding great and precious promises,” which were to have their fulfilment in future ages, on to the end of time. Though including temporal benefits, these were chiefly spiritual—

* Larger Catechism, Quest. 63.

mainly pointing to Christ, the promised Seed to come—to multitudes of believers, who by faith, are children of Abraham, and to a covenanted inheritance on earth and in heaven, of which the land of Canaan was a type. The covenant with Abraham was one—a dispensation of the same grace which was exhibited in the promise given in Eden on the back of the Fall. The foundation of all the blessings offered was the comprehensive proposal—“I am thy God,” “I will be a God to thee and thy seed.” The promises given were substantially one grant,—containing a variety of blessings, temporal and spiritual, adapted to the circumstances and necessities of the patriarch and his seed. In delivering them, God is exhibited in the same gracious character, as that by which He makes Himself known to sinners through Christ—as their covenant God and Portion—the Source and Fountain to them of all good. The seal and ratification of the covenant with Abraham were spiritual, and had a plain and pointed reference to the grace manifested through the Saviour, and to the great things of eternal salvation. Circumcision, the token and seal of the covenant, was a religious rite, designed to be a pledge of holy obedience, and to confirm the enjoyment of spiritual blessings and privileges. The sacrifices offered, when God renewed the promise to Abraham, were the appointed means of ratifying the covenant, and referred to the one great sacrifice of atonement; and the oath annexed to the promise (Gen. xxii.) was the highest sanction added to the federal transaction, and the fullest assurance of the accomplishment of all that God had promised. “Because he could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself, that, by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.”*

The promise to Abraham and his seed regarded them as a *visible Church* related to God in covenant (Gen. xvii. 7). “I will establish my covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee.” This emphatic and comprehensive declaration—here used for the first time, but afterwards often repeated—sums up all the temporal and spiritual blessings that had already been guaranteed to the patriarch by repeated promises. The foundation and security of the enjoyment of all promised blessings are laid in the

* Heb. vi. 18, 19.

covenant relation—"I will be thy God," "I will be the God of thy seed." Instead of regarding the promise as expressive of a mere temporal relation between God and Abraham and his seed, it is plain that it implies a spiritual visible church relation to God in covenant. A principal characteristic of the visible church is that it is a spiritual society, divinely organized, holding a special relation to God in covenant, and established for spiritual purposes. God is the Founder of the church. He appoints to her laws and ordinances, which are spiritual, as the means of revealing His grace; and He sets up ministers and other officers to administer these laws and ordinances, that so the grace of the covenant may be communicated to the heirs of salvation. The fundamental declaration—"I will be a God to thee"—proposes the most exalted and blessed relation, and secures the enjoyment of the highest spiritual privileges for time and eternity.

The seed of Abraham became more fully and formally organized as a National Church under the Mosaic economy; and it was still dealt with as a covenant-society. A priesthood, divinely called, was set up, and ordinances were appointed as channels of life and salvation to the heirs of promise. Jehovah condescended to stand to Israel in a peculiar honourable relation, as their God in covenant and theocratic King. This secured to them the highest privileges, and constituted their highest excellence. They thus became a "holy nation," a "peculiar treasure to God above all people," a "kingdom of priests."* Through the whole period of the Mosaic institute, God treats Israel as a people in covenant with Him. His dealings towards them are marked by special condescension and favour. He separates them from all other people on the face of the earth. He appoints them laws and ordinances, and promises them manifold blessings in their due observance, and according as they walk in the way of holy obedience. The covenant relation is ever exhibited as the ground of Jehovah's claim to their supreme homage and subjection. "I am thy God," "ye shall be to me a holy nation," a "peculiar treasure," a "people of inheritance." "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"†

* Ex. xix. 6.

† Deut. iv. 7, 8.

In the frequent federal transactions between God and His servants, recorded throughout the Old Testament history, and predictions, the church is uniformly represented as a covenant-society, and privileges and blessings are alone conferred in this connection. A covenant of privilege is the foundation of a covenant of duty—blessings being enjoyed in the way of holy obedience, and chastisements being sent as the fruit of dealing deceitfully in the covenant. Posterity was included with their ancestors in ancient federal engagements. Throughout subsequent generations, God remembers His covenant to them for good, and rewards their fidelity to solemn vows; while, in inflicting judgments, he assigns breach of covenant as the chief reason of their punishment and rejection. “Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.” “He hath remembered His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations.”* When Divine judgments are sent to waste and scatter churches, and to bring down nations, breach of covenant engagements is frequently assigned as the principal cause of these retributive visitations. (Deut. xxix. 24) “Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the Lord God of their fathers,” etc. “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel; Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant, which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace.”†

The visible church, founded on the Abrahamic covenant, continues to exist under the Gospel, and includes in its fellowship, the Gentiles called and believing in Christ. This federal transaction with the Patriarch may be regarded as “*the Charter of the visible Church*,” under both economies. This is frequently declared in the plainest and most positive terms in the Pauline Epistles of the New Testament. “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise.” “So then, they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”‡ The church is one spiritual body, united to one living Head, under both dispensations of the Law and the Gospel,—incorporated by one covenant under different administrations,—having

* Lev. xxvi. 42. Ps. cv. 8. † Jer. xi. 3, 4. ‡ Gal. iv. 28; iii. 9.

“one faith and baptism.”* Believers under the old economy are circumcised into this one body; they are now baptized into it. A profession of faith in the Messiah to come, as the Author of salvation, rendered the church visible under the Old Testament;—the like profession of faith in Christ already come, distinguishes the visible church under the Gospel. The Saviour Himself, and His apostles, plainly teach that the church of the Old Testament founded on God’s covenant with Abraham and the church of the New Testament are one and the same. “Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”† This foretels the rejection of the Jews—the lineal descendants of Abraham, and the calling of the Gentiles. “The children of the kingdom” are the Jewish people. When they shall have been expelled, because of their unbelief and rebellion, the Gentiles are admitted—and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, at the same spiritual feast—in the enjoyment of all its high and honourable privileges. So again—“The kingdom of heaven shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”‡ Here there is a manifest transfer of possession and privileges from one people to another. This evidently did not refer to a typical or secular kindom. It was the ceasing of the church-state of the Jewish people, or of “the adoption” on which they set so much value, and its allotment to those of the Gentile race. This plainly implies the identity of the church under both dispensations. The people who constitute its membership, and enjoy its privileges, are of different races and nationalities, but the incorporated society exists unchanged, and its distinguishing privileges are the same. The Apostle Paul repeatedly, in various emphatic declarations, teaches the unity of the visible church under the former and later economies, and represents the promise to Abraham as the charter of all its privileges—“The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”§ The covenant here referred to, is God’s covenant with Abraham, of which Circumcision was the sign and seal. This, the Law, or the Mosiac dispensation, could not disannul or make void. When the typical institutions are superseded by the blessed substance in Christ and the

* Eph. iv. 5. † Matt. viii. 11. ‡ Matt. xxi. 43. § Gal. iii. 17.

Gospel, it stands in full force—all the significancy of its promised blessings will be enjoyed on to the end, by all who by faith become the children of Abraham. Again, it is declared—“He (Christ) is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.”* Here, under the figure of a house, Jews and Gentiles are represented as dwelling in one large building, but wholly separated, the one from the other, by a strong “wall or partition.” This was the Mosaic ritual, which, while it existed, kept the two effectually parted asunder. This is now completely broken down through the atonement of Christ. The old covenant is set aside, and “the law of commandments contained in ordinances” is abrogated. The church appears constituted in its full glory and excellency on the basis of the Abrahamic covenant—composed of Jews and Gentiles—“both one in Christ.” In another very vivid and beautiful representation,† the apostle sets forth the same important truths—the unity of the church under the old and new dispensations, and the identity of the foundation of all its privileges. It is represented as a “good olive tree,” wide-spreading and fruitful, with its *natural* and *engrafted* branches.‡ The “root” is one and holy, as being separated and consecrated by covenant dedication. From the apostle’s reasoning, this is evidently Abraham—“the father of the faithful” and of “many nations.” The natural branches are Israel—the offspring of Isaac. The “olive tree” was their church-state, and their “fatness” was all their covenant-privileges, the blessing announced in the grand promise—“I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed,” and appropriated by the Patriarch’s faith. Of the natural branches, many because of their unbelief were broken off and rejected. Among such as remained, the Gentiles believing in Christ were grafted in, and were brought to partake of the fatness of the good olive tree. The Jewish and Gentile church is thus one; and when, in the day of future revival and blessing, through the conversion and ingathering of Israel, the natural branches will again be grafted in, it will be into “their own olive tree.” The “olive tree”—the one indestructible church, under its blessed Head, is still “*their own*”—even during the time of their excision and rejection, and remains such for their

* Eph. ii. 24.

† See a quotation from Cyprian, in Millar on the “Ruling Eldership.”

‡ Rom. xi. 16.

re-admission and enlarged blessing. This is the ground of the blessed hope of the salvation of Israel and of the fulness of the Gentiles coming to Christ. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved : as it is written—There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."*

The visible church especially appears as a covenant-society, under the clearer enlarged dispensation of the Gospel. Numerous predictions that were designed to mark their fulfilment in New Testament times, speak of this as its prominent characteristic. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.† "Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, and that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant."‡ "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation ; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it."§ "In those days, and at that time, the children of Israel and the children of Judah shall come . . . they shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant which shall not be forgotten."|| These bright predictions were, in part, accomplished, at the opening of the New Testament economy, and in the first organization of the Christian church. They are in process of enlarged fulfilment, during the whole progress of the Gospel ; and at the close of the dispensation, in the future conversion of the nations, the restoration of the Jewish people, and the universal outpouring of the Spirit, the bright predictions of the Word will be unfolded in their most glorious and wondrous accomplishment. The first Jewish converts to the Christian faith—the first members of the Christian church are addressed as the spiritual seed of Abraham, and as sharing with their fathers the privileges of God's covenant—"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And

* Rom. xi. 25, 26.

† Jer. xxxi. 31.

‡ Isa. lvi. 6.

§ Isa. xix. 18, 21.

|| Jer. l. 4, 5.

in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.”* This contains the precious assurance that, identified with believers under the Patriarchal and Mosaic economies, the church of the New Testament shares the same spiritual privileges as the covenanted heritage of the faithful in bypast ages. The primitive church founded by the apostles recognized God’s covenant with their fathers, as the charter of all their privileges; and on it they rested as the basis of social dedication and of all holy obedience. The Macedonian church manifested to others an example of enlarged liberality, in a season of trial, as the fruit of covenant-dedication. Beyond the expectation of the apostle—“they first gave their own selves to the Lord, and then” to His apostles, “by the will of God,” for the ready performance of any service to which they summoned them.† Down to the end of the apostolic age, and till the canon of Scripture closed, the Christian church exhibited all the characteristics of a covenant-society. They were gathered out of the nations, and were incorporated into one mystical body—a separate, peculiar people. For this society were provided precious ordinances, and all covenant privileges—in blessings of grace and in providential rule and benefits. The existence, extension, and universal establishment of the church in the earth are the fruit of Jehovah’s sovereign favour. Her high and honourable privileges are secured by covenant-stipulation. And her mission in the earth is to do the work assigned her in the purpose of Infinite wisdom; to which she has pledged herself by solemn engagements, and for the performance of which all grace and strength in the covenant are guaranteed. Herself blessed of the Lord, she is set up as a blessing in the earth, in accordance with the promise to Abraham—“In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

The special ordinances given to the Church by her glorious Head, that have been designated *symbolical* and *sealing*, exhibit her as a Covenant-Society—a “holy nation,” set apart to the Lord and owned by Him—by solemn voluntary vows, frequently renewed, displaying the character and doing the work of a covenant people in the earth. These ordinances were instituted for the purpose of teaching, by significant and impressive symbols, the great fundamental truths of the scheme of human redemption, and of confirming to the heirs of promise the

* Acts iii. 25.

† 2 Cor. viii. 5.

enjoyment of all precious New Covenant blessings. Circumcision given to Abraham as “a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith,”* was the great ordinance of initiation in the covenant; as the Passover, afterwards appointed, was the ordinance of nourishment in the covenant, instituted as the memorial of deliverance, and the prefiguration of spiritual redemption through the promised Saviour. Baptism, now taking the place of the former, is significant of the same spiritual blessings and privileges, and a like seal, confirmatory of their enjoyment to believers. And the Lord’s Supper, supplanting the ancient Passover, is the perpetual memorial and exhibition of the one great Propitiatory Sacrifice, to which all preceding types looked forward, and the ordained seal and ratification to believers of the covenant-inheritance.

* Rom iv. 11.

CHAPTER II.

THE REDEEMER'S HEADSHIP OVER THE CHURCH.

Col. i. 18—"He is the Head of the Body, the Church."

Eph. i. 22—"And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church."

THE grand design of the establishment of the church on earth is the manifestation of the Redeemer's glory in the salvation of sinners. This is the glory of His person, character, and work, and chiefly of His extensive regal dominion. The Headship of Christ over His church and over all things in the universe for her benefit, is a fundamental article of the faith that was once delivered to the saints—the cardinal principle of a martyr-testimony—the great truth required to be known, believed and held fast, if ordinances are to be preserved pure, and the blessing from on high is to accompany their administration. The plan of human redemption, devised in the eternal counsel of the Trinity, stands intimately connected with the Redeemer's dominion. He was "set King upon God's hill" from everlasting. His "goings forth," as Ruler of Israel, were "from of old, from everlasting." The dispensation of grace—introduced after man's apostacy, displayed the Mediator invested with royal authority; and all that was done in the history of the world, from the Fall till His manifestation in the flesh—in founding the church, appointing her laws and ordinances, preserving her in existence, and in originating, controlling, and subduing nations—was effected through the government being on His shoulders. While engaged in the work of obedience and suffering which He came to accomplish—even in His state of lowest abasement, the Saviour gave the clearest evidence of His royal Headship and supreme mediatorial authority. The proper reward of His obedience unto death—a work of transcendent merit—was His investiture with boundless dominion. "For the suffering of death, He was crowned with glory and honour." "He became obedient to the death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name" (Heb. ii. 8; Phil. ii. 8, 9).

As a *Divine Person*, the Redeemer has *essential, necessary, and universal dominion*. The Son of God was King from ages all, from eternity. In the matchless glory of His person, He is displayed as the Creator and First Cause as well as the Last End of the material universe. "All things were created by Him and for Him." "By Him all things consist." They stand in harmony and comely order by His sustaining power—are preserved from falling into confusion and non-existence—and made to subserve the great ends of their creation. "All things that He has called into being have their continued subsistence in Him." Creation and sustentation presuppose the right of universal dominion. The glorious First Cause has inherent authority to dispose of all things for His own glory. As one of the Persons of the Godhead, "His kingdom ruleth over all." He is "the King eternal, immortal, and invisible."

The Saviour's Divine glory is intimately connected with His Headship over the church—it is essential to its exercise, and to His dominion over all things throughout the universe for her benefit. In the close of a passage in Colossians, first chapter, which presents the most vivid view of the Divine dignity and excellence of the Redeemer, and of the church's surpassing privilege in her relation to One so highly exalted, He is declared—verse 18—to be "the Head of the Body, the church; who is the Beginning, the First-Born from the dead; that, in all things, He might have the pre-eminence." This passage explicitly declares that the absolute control and direction of the universe and of all that is in it are under the Mediator for the benefit of His church. All creatures and elements, all changes in Providence, all rulers and organized systems—material, moral, and spiritual,—angels in heaven, in their various ranks and orders, and devils, are in subjection to Him as their sovereign Lord. He is the directing, controlling, governing Head over all; and all, under His powerful dominion, are made to contribute to the present and eternal welfare of the church of the Redeemer. He is "the Beginning," the First Cause and Source of existence of the moral as well as of the material creation. He is likewise the Beginning, as He is the End of all salvation blessings. The whole of this bright representation is designed to show that "in all things" the Redeemer has the pre-eminence." As the "Image of the invisible God,"—the Author and last end of Creation—the Ruler in Providence—the living and life-giving Head of the Church, and, at the same time, the

Head of all things for her benefit, none can be compared to Him. His office and dignity excel in glory. While He is the Creator of the universe, and all creatures therein reflect His glory, His incarnation and death cast a new lustre over His original glory. The Lord of the universe is the “Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne.” A new and attractive splendour is shed around His inherent Majesty by His mediatorial crown. The First-Born from the dead is the Head of His body, the church ;—to her, the Fountain and Centre of life, the Source and Bestower of all saving and eternal blessings. Subdued by His gracious power, His people yield to Him the homage of their hearts ; and in their affections, confidence, and praises, as well as in the devoted service of their lives, He has in all things, as He is above all—“the pre-eminence.”

The Deity of the Redeemer constitutes his pre-eminent *fitness* for possessing and exercising absolute universal Dominion, and for being the church’s glorious and exclusive Head. He has omnipotent power to restrain and conquer all enemies, and to overcome all opposition. With infinite wisdom, He can employ the most suitable means for effecting His gracious purposes. His mercy and love are unfathomable and everlasting. In the greatness of his condescension and tender compassion, He regards the lowly and saves the children of the needy ; while in holiness and justice, He breaks in pieces those that oppress them. He is faithful to all His promises, and He keeps truth for ever. He never changes ; and as the church’s Head, he is subject to no weakness or decay. His throne is for ever and ever. He is the same, and His years have no end.

The universal dominion of Christ—as it is usually exhibited in sacred Scripture, is connected with the Divine purpose and plan of human redemption. By the royal Headship of the Redeemer, is meant His sovereign mediatorial dominion—all that power and authority which was delegated to Him by the Father, in the covenant of redemption, for the salvation of a ransomed people. This was given to Him by covenant-stipulation, and assigned to Him as the reward of His finished work. It comprehends His absolute dominion over “all things.” He is expressly said to have “all power in heaven and earth given Him” (John xvii. 2), to be “Head of every man” (1 Cor. xi. 3); “Head of all principalities and powers”

(Col. ii. 10); “Head of the heathen” (Ps. xviii. 43); and “Head over all things to His church” (Eph. i. 22). In most expressive and significant terms, it is declared—“Thou crownest Him with glory and honour, and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him” (Heb. ii. 7, 8).

The glory of the Saviour’s universal Headship is seen chiefly in two aspects, in relation to two associations—1 The Church; and 2, the Nations of the Earth, or Civil Society. As Mediator, He is the sole and exclusive Head of the church; and He is, at the sametime, Head of all principality and power—“King of kings and Lord of lords,” and “Governor among the nations.” As the church of God is the most important society in existence—the grand instrument for promoting the Divine glory throughout the world, and for bringing elect sinners to heaven, the Headship of Christ over this society exhibits Him in the most attractive view of His person, and office, and character, and is fraught with issues the most momentous and salutary.

Of the universal dominion of the Mediator, a principal part is the church which He purchased with His own blood, and which He takes into the nearest and most endearing relation to Himself. The *Westminster Confession* explicitly declares—“There is no other Head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ.” In the Scriptures, the church is uniformly represented as having one King, one Governor, one Husband—one glorious Head and Lord. He has, besides, all power and authority over all that affects her interests. He is distinguished by the highest moral worth. He is an ever-living and unchangeable Head (Song v. 11; Ps. lxxxix. 6). Not only is Christ Jesus the sole and exclusive Head of the church, He is likewise her Head, in the largest sense of the term, of the *Invisible church*, which is the whole body of the elect, who are chosen by grace, renewed by the Spirit, and made heirs of glory. He is her *vital Head*—as He communicates life to all the members, and every part of the body depends upon Him for its support, increase, and perfection. He is to them the fountain of grace and felicity. “Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John i. 16). He is, moreover, the governing *legislative Head* of the church, and the Head of honour and glory. Christ is the Foundation laid in Zion, tried, elect, precious; and of the building in its progress

and completion, He is the “Headstone of the corner” (Ps. cxviii. 22; Zech. iv. 7).

Of the Church *visible*, which consists of those who, gathered into a church-state, profess faith in Him and obedience to Him, with their children, He is the exclusive Head. This community He organizes. He is the Author of its ordinances and government. He enacts its laws, and appoints and upholds its office-bearers. All its immunities and privileges are conferred by Him. “The government is upon His shoulder” (Isa. ix. 6). “He walks amid the golden candlesticks, and holds the seven stars in His right hand” (Rev. i. 20). He is, moreover, Head of the church *local*. Wherever a community professing the Gospel is gathered out of the world, and formed into a congregation of worshippers, Christ is the author of its privileges—both outward and spiritual. He gives to it pastors and teachers, and the administration of ordinances according to His word; and these He makes the means of grace and blessing to His people. Finally, Christ is the Supreme Head of the Church *representative*. The officers that rule in His house are His, as their designation, calling, and qualifications are from Him; and He owns and accepts their work, for the promotion of His glory. He appoints the laws which they are to administer, and by which the affairs of His house are to be regulated. He endows His officers with gifts and delegated power. He sanctions their judicial procedure, ratifying their decisions as His own. To the rulers in His church called by Him and acting in His name, He declares,—“I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. xvi. 19). And, again, on the eve of His ascension, He said,—“As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. . . . Whose soever sin ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained” (John xx. 21-23).

Christ, the living Head of the church, is its glorious *Founder*. He gives existence to the church which He purchased with His blood, and organizes it as a *Covenant-Society* (Gal. iii. 17). It exists still, under every change of dispensation to the end of time. The church owes her whole origin to Christ. “The Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of His people shall trust in it” (Isa. xiv. 32). “The Lord doth build up Jerusalem. He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel” (Ps. clvii. 2). The

church founded by Christ in the earth derives its government and officers from Him—receives from Him its constitution and laws—accepts at His hand ordinances—draws from Him spiritual grace and influence—acts in His name, and is subject to His authority in all its proceedings.

He is also its everliving *Administrator*. In His church, Christ, her King, is at all times graciously present, as the Source of life and influence—of word and doctrine—of order and blessing. Is the church distinguished for spiritual life? Christ is its Fountain, Support, and glorious end. Is it doctrine that characterizes the Church's profession? The word is Christ's, and testifies of Him. He, the infallible Teacher, continues with His approved instrumentality, and imparts all saving knowledge by His Word and Spirit. He presides in ordinances, and renders them the channels of spiritual blessing to His people. All the grace and blessing bestowed upon the members of His mystical body flow to them from Him. The church, thus replenished with the fulness of her Head, becomes a living and gracious power in the earth. As the ever-present Administrator of power and authority in the church, Christ speaks through its voice, binds by its decisions, and makes its government and discipline felt in the conscience. The continual presence and power of her Divine Head is everything to the church. He is her Teacher, King, Lawgiver, and Judge. She has no government but what was ordained by Him, and no authority separate from His. Whatever saving grace is dispensed in Zion, is through the virtue and power of His Spirit. There is no blessing that does not flow from His hands. The glory of all the “excellent things” spoken of Zion redound to her exalted King for evermore. “Sing unto the Lord, for He hath done excellent things; this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee” (Isa. xii. 5, 6).

As the Supreme Head and Administrator of the church, the Lord Jesus is *present with the office-bearers whom He has appointed—sustaining and giving efficacy to their power and authority*. As the Church cannot exist without government, so it indispensably needs officers. The different kinds of these—their appointment, qualifications, and functions, are all matter of Divine prescription. This is the case both under the Old and New Economy. “No man taketh this honour unto himself but

he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Heb. v. 4). Ministers and other ecclesiastical officers are called, qualified, and ordained by the institution of Christ, as King and Head of the church; and none are to be regarded as His ascension-gifts who are destitute of such an investiture. We have no right to dispense with an office that Christ has instituted. The Divine blessing may certainly be expected with officers who are set up by His appointment, when they act in His name, according to the rule of His word, and when they aim in all their official procedure to advance His glory. He "clothes His priests with salvation." He "will bless the house of Aaron." He promises to be with the ministers of the word bearing His commission, "Even to the world." "He that heareth you heareth Me, and He that heareth Me, heareth Him that sent Me." The King of Zion comes with His Ambassadors, giving effect to the overtures of mercy and peace which they make, and rendering them "the ministry of reconciliation." He presides among assembled elders. The assurance that "where two or three are met in His name," He is graciously present (Matt. xviii. 20), has primary and special respect to the judicatories of the church, for it stands immediately connected with the infliction and removal of ecclesiastical censures. His presence is with His approved servants to ratify their judicial acts—to render them binding upon the conscience, and a means of grace and blessing. Whatsoever the minister binds on earth He binds in heaven, and whatsoever it looses on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Further, in the exercise of Headship over the church, the Redeemer *blesses the administration* of ordinances, and renders them *effectual to salvation*. The doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of the church are all designed for the salvation of souls. Their sanctifying and saving effects all flow from the power and grace of the church's glorious Head. The special efficacy of the word and ordinances is through the power and energy of the Holy Spirit. He is sent by the ascended Redeemer, and His mission is the grand proof that Christ has risen, and that He reigns in glory. The word spoken and blessed is "the word of a King in which there is power." As the blessed Head of the church, the Redeemer presides in ordinances that are faithfully dispensed in His name. As the King sits at His table, whether in the gospel or sacramental feast, the "spikenard" of His people's graces sends forth its

fragrance. Through the word and ordinances which He blesses, He confers pardon—speaks peace to the conscience, gives the sense of His love, and imparts strong consolation. He subdues spiritual enemies. He makes the place of His feet glorious. His house He fills with His gracious presence ; and “upon all the glory there is a defence.” Concerning Zion, it shall be said, “This and that man was born in her ; and the Highest Himself shall establish her” (Ps. lxxxvii. 5). “And the name of the city from that day shall be, THE LORD IS THERE” (Ezek. xlviii. 35).

Finally, the Headship of Christ over the Church secures universal *diffusion and perpetuity to all generations*. The church is destined to the widest extension. “The mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains”—(Isa. ii. 2). “The ‘Little Stone,’ cut out without hands, becomes a great mountain, and ultimately ‘fills the earth’” (Dan. ii. 35). The Mediator, invested with universal sovereignty, will, in due time, put forth His power for the church’s wide extension. The gospel—“the word of the kingdom”—shall be preached “to every creature.” Zion’s light shall be diffused throughout the nations, till “the veil of the covering” that envelopes them shall be rent asunder. The outward ordinances of visible Christianity shall be dispensed universally and in purity ; and the means of grace shall be rendered effectual by the outpouring of the Spirit. Idolatry, superstition, error, and oppression shall be removed. The power of Antichrist shall be destroyed, and Mahomedan delusion shall cease. All Israel shall be saved. The fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in. “The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ” (Rev. xi. 15). “He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth” (Ps. lxxii. 8). By the power of her exalted King, the Church shall be *perpetuated* on the earth. Other dominions have in them the seeds of decay and decline, and are doomed to perish ; but this endures throughout all ages and to eternity. “He shall reign over the house of Judah for ever.” “His name shall be continued as long as the sun—Men shall be blessed in him—all nations shall call him blessed” (Ps. lxxii. 17).

The last stage of the church’s history on earth is the brightest. “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. ii. 14). “The light

of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days" (Isa. xxx. 26). There shall arise no fifth world-power in the earth—instead, Christ's kingdom of power, symbolized by "the Little Stone" having become "a great mountain," shall fill the whole earth.

The terms of prophetic announcement respecting the universality and perpetuity of the Redeemer's kingdom are singularly expressive and emphatic. Dan. vii. 14—"Behold, one like the Son of man was brought to the Ancient of days . . . and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

The Dominion of Christ over nations and over the invisible world, which has sometimes been termed His "*subsidiary kingdom*," is necessary to his Headship over the church, and essential to the enjoyment by His people of the benefits resulting from it. Their eternal salvation could not be effected, if the Redeemer had not direct and absolute control over all persons, events, and things that could oppose or frustrate it. The church's enlargement and final universal establishment could not be accomplished, if her exalted Head was destitute of authority and power to render everything in the universe subservient to these glorious ends. Zion's children have the highest reason to be joyful in their King (Ps. cxlix. 3). His people may ever rejoice that He reigns over all, and that there is nothing that is not put in subjection under Him. The world's peace and happiness are inseparably connected with the church's stability and prosperity. The enthroned Mediator reigns to put down opposing power and authority. By spiritual conversion or by judgments poured out, He will effect the entire subjection of man everywhere to His sceptre of righteousness. The whole earth shall be filled with His glory. The royal Headship of the Redeemer is fully adequate to accomplish these important ends.

The ordinance of the *Lord's Supper* exhibits in the most attractive aspects the glory of the Saviour's person, offices, and finished atonement. It especially displays the lustre of His crown and sceptre, as the King and Head of the church. As her living Head and Husband, He condescends to maintain the nearest communion with His people, and to confer upon

then honourable privileges. Right views of His supreme and exclusive Headship would guard and protect the ordinance from all unscriptural perversions and conceptions, and would render its observance the means of extensive blessing to the church—and of the future establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom in the earth. It is only by the due confession of the Saviour's Mediatorial Headship that the abundant benefit of the sacrament of the Supper to the church *as a Covenant-Society* can be realized. In our apprehension, the purity, power, and rich fruits of this distinguishing ordinance can never be fully known and enjoyed, save in connection with the grand article of a blood-sealed Testimony—the supreme universal Mediatorial Headship of the Redeemer over the church and over all things for her benefit. The call to the enjoyment of the highest privilege is, "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart" (Song iii. 11).

CHAPTER III.

THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH.

THE Scriptures teach plainly and everywhere that human salvation is wholly of God's sovereign free grace. Being of Divine favour alone in its origin, and in all the provision made for its accomplishment, its actual enjoyment is through a gracious work in the heart—especially by faith whereby we become partakers of Christ, and all the benefits of redemption. The faith which is saving unites to Christ, and appropriates Him in all His offices and blessings, and is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, in the use of certain ordained means. Through His agency, the soul dead in sin is quickened, and sinners are born again. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”* The Saviour, in His discourse with Nicodemus, declares the indispensable necessity of faith, equally as of the New birth, in order to salvation. “Ye must be born again.” “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”†

Though the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart—renewing and transforming the moral nature, is direct and immediate, it is by means of the truth revealed in the Word. We are “born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” “Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.” “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”‡ The grand and eminent means by which faith works, and realizes its end—the salvation of the soul, is “the Word of truth”—and as subsidiary, and confirmatory of the word—the sacraments of the Covenant. Our Westminster Standards teach that we can only “escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin,” and come to the enjoyment of life eternal—“through faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance unto life”—as the *internal work* of grace in the heart, and by “the diligent use of the word, sacrament, and prayer”—as the *external means* by which are “communicated

* John iii. 6. † John iii. 7, 14, 15. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 23; Jas. i. 18; Rom. x. 14.

the benefits of redemption." This is briefly and comprehensively stated in the words of the *Hidelberg Catechism*—" *The Holy Ghost works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the Gospel, and confirms it by the use of the Sacraments.*" The Gospel is thus presented as the Divine testimony which we are required to believe ; and the Sacraments are provided for the confirmation and assurance of this testimony to our hearts. In the expressive words of *Bishop Jewell*, "As the seals of princes confirm and warrant their deeds and charters, so do the Sacraments witness to our consciences that God's promises are true, and shall continue for ever. Thus doth God make known His secret to His Church : first, He declareth His mercy by His word ; then, He sealeth and openeth it by His sacraments. In the word, we have His promises, in the sacraments, we see them."

The term **SACRAMENT** is not found in the Scriptures, but is a word of Latin origin, used by the early Christians to designate the confirming ordinances of religion. It was at first, applied, in a civil sense, to whatever was consecrated or set apart for a sacred purpose. Money deposited as a pledge by contending parties was so termed, because, in the case of forfeiture, it was handed over to sacred uses. An oath made in the name of some deity was styled a *sacrament*; and especially the oath of a Roman soldier to his general, in which he bound himself to obey his commands, to follow him in victory or defeat, and never to desert his standard, was thus designated. The special ordinances of the New Testament are sometimes represented as receiving the name of sacraments, in allusion to the military oath, because they involve a solemn vow of a like kind to the Captain of salvation. There is, however, no evidence that the primitive Christians had any reference to this usage when they employed this designation. With much greater propriety, it may be shown that the term is derived from the Latin rendering of the Greek word (*μυστήριον*) *mystery*, which is found in various passages of the New Testament—and applied to anything sacred or consecrated—and not infrequently to a sign that had a secret import, the knowledge of which could only be acquired by the *initiated*.* In this sense, a sacrament may be regarded, in general, as a sign or symbol of

* In the Vulgate, the word *μυστήριον* is rendered *Sacramentum* in Eph. i. 9; iii. 9; Col. i. 27; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Rev. i. 20. In Eph. v. 32—"This is a great mystery," etc.—Vulgate—"Hoc est magnum sacramentum." So 1 Tim. iii. 16—"Great is the mystery of godliness,"—Vulgate—"Magnum est sacramentum," etc.

a thing sacred. Viewed in various aspects, the name may be taken to indicate simply the *external signs or rites*, or the *internal things* signified by them, or, as embracing both the external and internal parts—the sign and the thing signified. In its fullest and widest sense, a Sacrament denotes a sign and seal of the Covenant of grace made between the Father and the Son for the benefit of the church.

All the Sacraments were instituted by Christ, the King and Head of the church, for conferring on her the highest blessings. In every case, they are to be regarded as signs, having in general and in all their parts, a holy or religious character. Of the sacraments of the Old Testament, Circumcision denoted the putting away of the sins of the flesh, as the Passover was an impressive sign of deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and prefigured redemption through the sacrifice of Christ. Under the New Economy, Baptism is emblematical of spiritual cleansing, and the Lord's Supper of spiritual nourishment.* The water in baptism denotes the blood of Christ, as its effusion points to the work of the Spirit, applying it for purifying the heart and cleansing the life. The bread and the wine in the Supper point to the provision made for sustaining the spiritual life of the believer through the obedience and atoning death of the Redeemer. Designed to be perpetual, the sacraments were appointed to be a most significant and impressive means of instruction—to convey the blessings of life and salvation to those who by faith receive them, and to be seals of God's covenant of peace for confirming and strengthening the faith and hope of believers. Not inappropriately, though rather vaguely, one of the schoolmen defines a sacrament to be "a visible sign or form of an invisible grace."† The definition given in the Westminster *Shorter Catechism* is expressive and singularly comprehensive—"A holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein by visible signs, Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers." We are thus taught, that, in order to an ordinance being a sacrament, an illustrative sign is absolutely required; and that

* In Maestricht's learned work—"Theoretico-Practica Theologia," Tom. ii., the subject of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper is discussed with much fulness, under the heads of the Sacrament of *Initiation* and of *Nutrition*.

† Peter Lombard—"Sacramentum invisibilis gratiæ visibilis forma." Augustine also says—"An external offering is a visible sacrament of an invisible sacrifice, that is a holy sign."—*City of God*, B. x. c. 5.

this sign is designed to be, in some sort, a representation of the objects of our faith. The washing of water in baptism is a designed figure of the purification of our souls by the blood of Christ, as the participation of the outward elements in the Supper symbolizes our spiritual nourishment by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and our communion with the members of His mystical body.

The sacraments, moreover, are not mere signs and representations, however vivid or impressive—they are likewise *seals*, ratifying the Divine Covenant and confirming, to those who are interested in it, the blessings which it provides and confers. Thus, the sacrament of Circumcision was appended to God's Covenant with Abraham, and was "a sign and seal of the righteousness by faith."* To the father of the faithful it was God's own seal to the truth of the promise, as it separated and distinguished his seed from the world lying in wickedness, and assured them of the possession of all the blessings provided in the Covenant. So, the sacraments of the New Testament, which have superseded those of the Old, assure those who rightly receive them of their interest in the promise, and seal to them the enjoyment of all salvation blessings. As, by circumcision, the seed of Abraham became "debtors to fulfil the whole law," so, in both the sacraments under the Gospel, we seal our solemn engagement to be the Lord's.

The sacrament is a sign and seal of the grace of God—appointed by God, and instituted by Christ, the Mediator, as King and Head of the church. To God alone it belongs to prescribe the manner in which He will be worshipped; and, therefore, it is wholly unlawful, on the one hand, to neglect the observance of ordinances which he has appointed; and on the other, to bring aught into the sacraments which He has not commanded. The Lord Jesus as sole and sovereign Head of the church, claims the exclusive prerogative of prescribing all His ordinances, as He presides over all the administration. He alone gives the word, and accompanies it with saving power. To it He appends the sacraments, and when they are observed as He instituted them, He renders them efficient for the grand designs of His wisdom and love in His people's salvation. Not unsuitably, therefore, does Augustine declare—"He hath joined the word to the element or sign, and it is made a sacrament."

* Gen. xvii. 10; Rom. iv. 11.

The *Ends* for which the sacraments have been instituted by the Redeemer are, in the highest sense, important and beneficent. They are given to nourish and confirm our faith in the Gospel. This they do by the working of the Spirit in them who truly partake of them, in various respects. They represent to our outward senses, by lively and significant emblems, the great truths of the system of grace. They thus aid our weakness, in bringing down Divine mysteries to the level of our minds. The water applied in baptism thus becomes the significant means of fixing our hearts upon the necessity of the application of the blood of Christ for pardon and sanctification, and of the power of the Spirit in renewing the heart. By the word, our souls are nourished up to life eternal ; and the sacrament of the Supper, by presenting bread and wine to our outward senses, powerfully reminds us of our entire dependence upon Christ's atoning sacrifice, for the food and life of the soul. The sacraments were designed to be badges to the Lord's people of their separation from the world, and of their union in the same mystical body to Christ, the living Head. The church of Christ is a "sacramental host," separated from the world—lying in the Evil one—gathered together to witness for all Christ's truth, and to fight against all the enemies of His cause in the earth. The sacraments are the badges of their solemn profession—the visible marks of their separation from the ignorant and ungodly. By these, they openly attest that they are on the Lord's side, and are identified with His people. In Baptism, the believer dedicates himself and his offspring to the Lord. In the Lord's Supper, he ratifies his vow of fidelity to Christ and His cause ; and by the use of sacred symbols, he professes the nearest and most loving brotherly fellowship with saints in heaven and on earth. These holy ordinances are appointed as tokens of Christ's perpetual gracious presence in the church. In the observance of Circumcision and the Passover of old, God condescended to dwell with His people Israel ; and as He met with them in these ordinances, the "Tabernacle was sanctified by His glory."* In the institution of Baptism as a sacrament, He declared to His servants dispensing it, in the Great Commission—"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."† And in the Lord's Supper, He renews and confirms His Covenant to His people, assuring them that He will ever

* Ex. xxix. 43.

† Mat. xxviii. 20.

dwell among them, and that in “all places where His name is recorded,” He will be with them, to bless them. Showing forth Christ’s death, till He come again, believers have the visible sign of His special presence now, as they enjoy bright visions and foretastes of His glorious presence in His everlasting kingdom. The Doctrinal Symbols of the Reformed Churches give full and harmonious expression to such views of the *nature* and *ends* of the sacraments. In the *Twenty-Fifth Article of the Church of England*, it is declared—“Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession ; but rather they be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, and of God’s will towards us, by which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him.” In the *Hidelberg Confession* (Art. xxxiii.) the following full and explicit statement is made—“We believe that our gracious God, on account of our weakness and infirmities, hath ordained the sacraments for us, thereby to seal unto us His promises, and to be pledges of the goodwill and grace of God toward us, and also to nourish and strengthen our faith, which He hath joined to the word of the Gospel, the better to present to our senses, both that which He signifies to us by His word, and that which he works inwardly in our hearts, thereby assuring and confirming in us the salvation which He imparts to us.”

And in the *Westminster Confession*, “Sacraments” are described as “holy signs and seals of the Covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits, and to confirm our interest in Him ; as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church and the rest of the world ; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His word.”

Augustine thus expressly sets forth the ends of the Sacraments—“God hath gathered together the fellowship of a new people by Sacraments, very few in number, very easy in observance, very excellent in signification—as is Baptism, consecrated in the name of the Trinity, and the Communion of His own body and blood.”—(Aug. Ep. 118, ad. Januar.)*

* In the *Irish Articles of Religion* (1615), the nature and ends of the Sacraments are succinctly stated—“The sacraments ordained by Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession, but rather certain sure witnesses and effectual and powerful signs of grace, and of God’s good will towards us, by which He doth work invisibly in us, and not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE LORD'S SUPPER—ITS INSTITUTION—THE TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCES—THE LESSONS TAUGHT BY ITS APPOINTMENT.

THE sacramental seals of the Old Testament—CIRCUMCISION and THE PASSOVER—had a like general signification with those of the New Economy—BAPTISM and the LORD'S SUPPER—which have replaced them. Circumcision, like Baptism, was a sign of initiation in the covenant; and the Lord's Supper, equally with the Passover, is symbolical of nourishment in the covenant. Both these New Testament ordinances are simpler in their elements and in the mode of their observance: they are designed for more universal observance, and with greater clearness, they exhibit the spiritual blessings which they are the ordained means of communicating.

The Historical account of the institution and first observance of the Lord's Supper, as given by the different Evangelists, details the circumstances at the close of the Saviour's personal ministry with singular simplicity, in the most vivid and affecting manner. Six days before the last significant Passover celebrated on earth, our Lord came up from Jericho towards Jerusalem, where He was to suffer and die; and arrived, probably late on Friday evening, at Bethany, the house of Lazarus and his sisters. There, in the retreat of a loving and beloved family—and in sanctified friendship, the Redeemer of the world spent His last earthly Sabbath. In the evening of the day—either in their own house, or in one near, whose owner owed to the Saviour the miraculous love which restored him to society, they made Him a supper—all seeking to put honour upon Him as a Divine Guest and their blessed Benefactor. Martha serves: Lazarus sits at the table with the Lord—the fresh proof of His Omnipotence; while Mary gives expression to her gratitude and heartfelt affection in a way which, though blamed by the disciples, was approved by Christ, as a memorial of devoted piety to all succeeding generations.

The next day—the first of the week, was that of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. There, by an act of authority, He cleansed the Temple, wrought miracles of healing, and

accepted the Hosannas of the children, glorifying the Son of David. Early on the morning of the next day (Tuesday), our Lord and His disciples took their way to Jerusalem, and re-entered the Temple. This day—the last of our Lord's public ministry on earth, was distinguished by His speaking words of heavenly wisdom, as the former showed His Divine power in wondrous works. In the morning, on His way to the city, He cursed the barren fig-tree, and it speedily became withered from its roots. In the Temple, He preached as the Great Prophet of the covenant, the glad tidings of the kingdom—vindicated His authority against the questioning of the Sanhedrim—and spoke the parables of the Two Sons sent into the vineyard, and of the Husbandmen and the Heir—setting before His enemies the wickedness of their conduct, and their sure and merited condemnation. The parable of the Marriage of the King's Son was the last exhibition made by the Great Teacher of the full blessed provision of the Gospel, and the last merciful warning addressed to them who contemned it. He then exposed the malicious schemes of the Sadducees and Pharisees, and put them to silence—and manifested His dignity and glory as the Son and yet the Lord of David. As He withdrew from the Temple, He noticed the action of the poor widow, as she cast her offering into the Treasury, with special commendation; and gave the most impressive instruction to the stranger Greeks who, as they came to worship at the Feast, sought an interview with Him. In the act of finally leaving His Father's house on earth, He gave prophetic utterance to the fearful prospects which awaited the magnificent structure, which His disciples viewed with fond admiration. And when He had cleared the precincts of the city, as He sat on the Mount of Olives, to a few of His apostles who inquired of Him respecting the time of the threatened doom, He presented an awe-inspiring picture of the desolation approaching, blending with it a reference to the end of the world, and the last Judgment. The two Parables of the *Ten Virgins* and the *Talents*, which most probably were then spoken, present in awful distinctness, the value of past privileges—the individual accountability of those who enjoy them, and the circumstances and award of the Last Judgment.

The next day—Wednesday, was spent by our Lord in holy retirement, and in communion with the Father, as the immediate preparation for the scene of indescribable agony and

suffering into which He was about to enter, while the Jewish Sanhedrim, in concert with Judas, were maturing their plans to compass His destruction. On the next day—Thursday—the close of which, according to Jewish reckoning, was the commencement of the *Fourteenth of Nisan*, the Saviour kept the Passover with His disciples, and at the conclusion of the sacred Feast, instituted the Lord's Supper. As He was by His human nature, and by His Circumcision, a member of the Jewish Church, He strictly observed, while He sojourned on earth, all its ordinances, until their end was accomplished in His death. Of these ordinances, the PASSOVER, or Feast of the Paschal Lamb—instituted on the occasion of the slaying of Egypt's first born, and the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage, was the principal. It was commemorative of a wonderful fact, and was, at the sametime, symbolical or typical, prefiguring the far greater salvation through the promised Messiah, and in its perpetual observance, designed to point the faith and hope of the true Israel to that most important event. During the period of His public ministry, our Lord had repaired stately to Jerusalem, and had kept, with the tribes that went up to worship, all the Passovers that had occurred. This was the Fourth, invested with greater solemnity to Him than any of the preceding, as He knew that His appointed hour of suffering was at hand, and He was now “straitened,” till His predicted baptism of blood was “accomplished.” It was probably toward the close of the day, that He despatched two of His disciples—Peter and John—with a special message to a believing follower in the city, and with orders to make ready the Passover. In the evening of the day, the Saviour entered the Upper prepared chamber, in company with the rest of His disciples; and sitting down with them, according to the Institution, He kept the Passover, as a father and head, with His collected family.*

* *The Time.*—From various statements, especially in the narrative of the Fourth Evangelist, it has been maintained by many eminent divines and others that our Lord celebrated the Passover with His disciples twenty-four hours earlier than it was observed by the rest of the Jews. They say, He ate the Paschal Supper on the eve with which the fourteenth of Nisan commenced; and it was on that day that He suffered, and towards its close, while the body of the nation was observing it, that He was crucified. It is of no consequence to inquire on what grounds, this significant change was made—it is enough to say there was sufficient reason for the alteration, and that in making it our Lord exercised the authority which was un-

With more than usual solemnity, the Evangelists represent our Lord as making preparation for celebrating this last Passover festival. He deputed selected disciples to prepare the feast—and by prophetic wisdom, He announced to them the reception with which they would meet. When He entered the guest chamber, He sat down and the twelve apostles with Him. According to Oriental usage, He and those who were with Him reclined at table, to signify their liberty, ease, and leisure in partaking of the domestic meal. With special emphasis, He declared—"With desire, I have desired"—or I have intensely desired, "to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15). Thus He testified His love to them to the end—this being the last feast of fellowship that He would keep with them on earth. Thus, too, He indicated the greatness of the sufferings that awaited Him, and the refreshment which He sought to enjoy from communion with loved disciples in preparation for embittered sufferings. There were the highest reasons for this peculiar care and solemnity on the part of our Lord at this momentous crisis. The Passover, while commemorating the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage, was typical of a much greater deliverance. The Paschal Lamb typified the Saviour Himself—at once the sacrifice for the sins of His people, and their glorious Deliverer. Through the sprinkling of His blood were their freedom from condemnation, and their safety from the Destroyer. The eating of the flesh of the

doubtedly His. The early Greek Fathers, and the Primitive Church generally, concur in this view of the *time*, at which the Saviour observed the last Passover and instituted the Lord's Supper. Notwithstanding the difficulties in reconciling the apparent discrepancies in the accounts of the different Evangelists, concerning the time, there is, we think, strong reason to believe that our Lord celebrated the Passover with His disciples at the season prescribed in the Mosaic institution. The command for the observance of the ordinance was precise—and stronger reasons than any which have been adduced, are required to show that it was not obeyed to the letter on this solemn occasion—"Let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at his appointed season. In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season : according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it." The violent and lengthened disputes between the Eastern and Western Churches respecting the time of observing Easter, originated from the views taken about the partaking of the Paschal Feast by our Lord and His apostles. While apparent scriptural testimony may be pleaded in favour of the Eastern usage, it is deplorable to think how little of the spirit of Christianity there was displayed on the one side and the other in conducting this embittered controversy.

Paschal Lamb symbolized their union to Him, and participation of all the benefits of His salvation. By His death on the cross, and by His resurrection, He was about to effect the redemption which God had provided in the Covenant, and which was foreshadowed by expressive signs. It was therefore eminently befitting that He should, on this last opportunity before He suffered, eat with His disciples the Passover; and that He should take occasion from this significant rite, to institute a sacrament that was to continue to the end of time, as the grand memorial of His atoning death, and of His people's eternal salvation. As the Paschal Feast proceeded, or towards its close,* the Saviour rose from the table, and performed the significant action of washing the feet of His disciples. He thus reproved their spirit of contention about superiority—taught them an impressive lesson of humility, and mutual kindness, and inculcated the indispensable necessity of spiritual purity, as indispensable to an interest in Him, and the blessings of His kingdom.

To His disciples, at the conclusion of the Passover service, the Saviour tendered the solemn prophetic warning that one of them should betray Him. He relieved the distress of the saddened company, by a special intimation that the traitor was he to whom the sop would be given when he had dipped it. When this was soon after done, the self-convicted betrayer—"the son of perdition"—went out, separating himself for ever from Christ, and the company of genuine disciples.† The

* The rendering of the phrase *δείπνον γιροφένον*—by “supper being ended”—in the Authorized version is unhappy. It should rather be, “supper having come,” as Alford gives it, “when supper was begun,” or, with Bengel—“supper going on—during supper.”

† The question has been much agitated whether Judas was present with the other disciples, and partook with them of the Lord's Supper; and it still comes up occasionally for discussion among those who take different views of the law of admission to the sacred ordinance. A due consideration of the narrative of the events, that occurred on the night of the Saviour's betrayal—especially of that contained in the thirteenth chapter of John, would, as we think, satisfactorily answer the question. The only dish in which the sop could be dipped, was that of the mixture of “bitter herbs,” which was used alone at the Passover; and after this was done, and the sop was given to Judas, “immediately he went out,” and returned not again to the upper chamber. He was not therefore present at the institution of the Supper, nor was he a partaker of it. We are fully aware that distinguished expositors, such as Beza, Hammond, and others, have maintained that Judas took part in the communion feast, and we can, to some extent, sympathize with the difficulties that appeared to Calvin when

evangelist emphatically records—"And it was night"—emblematical of the deed of dark atrocity that was then brooding in his heart—and of the black and endless despair that was opening before him. When the one false disciple had left the company, and the Saviour was alone with those whom He loved, His heart was enlarged in tender affection and sympathy; and He poured it out in words of strong consolation, and loving counsel. With special compassion on Peter, He warned him of his danger—reproved his self-confidence, and intimated to him the only way of recovery and safety—and gave the virtual assurance that he would ultimately be received to His glory.

Amid actions and words so affecting and impressive—though at the time so little understood, the Saviour concluded the last Passover Feast, and immediately after instituted, in due and solemn order, the sacrament of the Supper. As at the close of the Paschal meal, according to the usual custom, He took the cup and giving thanks, handed it to the assembled disciples, He added significantly—"I will no more drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in my Father's kingdom."* This was His solemn farewell to Old Testament ordinances—His intimation that the New Economy was about to be introduced—and the joy-inspiring pledge given that He would hereafter have refreshing fellowship with His people upon earth, and would ultimately receive them to full blessed communion at His table in the kingdom of heaven.† The account given by the different Evangelists of the appointment of the sacrament of the Supper

he held this to be doubtful. But the evidence, in our view, preponderates in favour of the opinion maintained by Piscator and Doddridge, That Judas departed finally from the company of the disciples, as he left the chamber, at the close of the Passover. To assume that Judas was present at the Lord's Supper, and that therefore unworthy persons are to be admitted with the Saviour's sanction to sealing ordinances, is in every respect illogical and wrong. It takes for granted what cannot be proved. Even if he were present, up till that time, he had maintained a credible profession; and though he was a hypocrite, his real character was only known to Christ. His admission by our Lord to the seal of the Covenant would only go to show that it is not real saintship, but an intelligent profession, with nothing outwardly to discredit it, that is to be with us the rule of admission to the sacramental feast. It cannot possibly furnish the least warrant for dispensing the highest privileges of the Church to those who are ignorant or profane, or whose lives are known to be opposed to the spirit and practice of the Gospel.

* Matt. xxvi. 29.

† See Appendix.

is remarkable for its wonderful simplicity. "As they were eating"—without any formal conclusion of the Paschal Feast, Jesus took a portion of the bread that was on the table—"blessed it"—gave thanks—and brake and gave it for participation to the disciples, saying—"Do this in remembrance of me." In like manner, He afterwards took the cup, and giving thanks, He handed it also to them, saying—"This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for many for the remission of sins:—drink ye all of it." How simple, and yet how significant and expressive is this transition from the chief Old Testament ordinance to the great perpetual festival of the New Economy! That which was old and shadowy vanishes away, like the dimness of the dawn merging into the full light of the risen day.

In connexion with this institution of the Supper, and its first dispensation by the Master Himself, the last of the Evangelists records in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of his Gospel, that our Lord spoke to His sorrowing disciples His great *discourse of consolation*,—designed to comfort their hearts under the pressure of a great sorrow, and to be for the instruction and support of His redeemed people to the end of time; and He concluded with the comprehensive prayer contained in the 17th chapter. Whether the whole of this remarkable discourse was spoken during the service, or the portion contained in the 14th chapter was delivered after the breaking of the bread, and all the remainder at the conclusion, it is immaterial, as it seems impossible to determine. It is enough for us to know that the great truths so clearly propounded in this wondrous discourse are the most suitable for the commemoration of the dying love of Christ; and that the precious promises and assured hopes presented in it are the highest and best that can be confirmed to our hearts by the seal of the Covenant.

II. THE SACRAMENTAL ELEMENTS—ACTIONS—AND WORDS.

The material Signs or "Elements" used in the institution of the Supper—the actions performed and words spoken by our Lord, deserve particular consideration, as they were doubtless intended to be significant and expressive of weighty spiritual instruction. Our Lord "took bread," which evidently was a portion of the unleavened cake or loaf which lay on the

Table, and had been used in the Paschal Feast.* He also took "the cup" of wine—that which was likewise used in the Passover, and was the common beverage in the land of Judea. These material elements as employed by our Lord were adapted to represent His body and blood. The bread in its preparation, and as being necessary for the nourishment of our bodies, fitly symbolized Christ's body, as the spiritual food for our souls—"the bread of life that came down from heaven." Wine too—as the expressed juice of the grape, and of natural products most strengthening and refreshing, was emblematical of His atoning blood, as forced by violence from His body, and the grand means of reviving and comforting our souls. The Saviour "*took*" these elements in a marked and impressive manner, to show to His disciples the importance of the action; and both of them were used, that they might furnish a complete representation of the provision made in His obedience and suffering for the salvation of His people. It is farther recorded that *He "gave thanks,"* plainly meaning to the Father, as He took into His hands each of the sacramental elements. This is the statement of the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xi. 25), in the full account which he gives of the Institution. The Evangelists use a somewhat different mode of expression in speaking of this action. Matthew says, "*He blessed it*" (xxvi. 26). Mark, "*He took bread and blessed and brake it*" (xiv. 22). The word *it* is a supplement of our translators, and has no word corresponding to it in the original. As the inspired narrative obviously implies that the expressions are of the same import, the better supplement would be *God*, instead of *it*. "*Jesus took bread and blessed God and brake it.*" The elements were not blessed by the Saviour, so as to produce any transmutation in their substance; and they are not to be consecrated, or set apart by His servants in any superstitious manner to act with an intrinsic virtue on men's bodies or souls. The blessing is not upon the elements themselves, but is that which accompanies Christ's own institution, rendering it efficient of gracious ends to the worthy partakers. The "*Consecration Prayer;*" rightly understood, which is offered in administering the Lord's Supper, is not liable to the objections which have sometimes been ignorantly advanced against it. It is in full accordance with our Lord's example; it "*sanctifies,*" or sets apart to a separate use, "*by the word of God and by prayer,*" the material

elements; and it seeks that through the Divine blessing, they may conduce to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

The Saviour next “*broke the bread*,” and gave it to His disciples, saying—“This is my Body, which is broken for you.” Both the action and the words are singularly significant. The breaking of the bread shadowed forth the bruising and crucifying of His body, and was a prediction of His sufferings and of His willingness to die in the room of His people. From this action, the ordinance itself is designated by the sacred writers “The Breaking of Bread”—the words used by our Lord and His apostles expressly and emphatically teaching that there is no observance of the institution, when an unbroken wafer is used, instead of bread broken, as is done under the Romish apostacy. He further gave it to His disciples, with the words “*Take eat.*” This is symbolical of the precious free gift of Himself as the true bread of life to sinners. Their taking the bread into their hands, and eating it shadowed forth their reception, by believing appropriation of Christ and His benefits for their salvation. The same action still by believers in the sacramental feast is strongly expressive of their desire and delight in receiving and resting upon the provision of a crucified Saviour for the salvation of the soul, and of their communion with fellow-saints in the sacred ordinance. “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? The cup which we drink, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? For we, being many, are one body and one bread, for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor. x. 16, 17).

As Jesus gave the elements to His disciples, He used other words—“*This is my Body—this is my blood.*” The language was plainly figurative, and must be so understood. It meant that the Bread which had been broken represented His body crucified for them, and that the wine poured out, which was emblematical of His blood shed, represented His sufferings and death endured in their stead. When Romanists teach that the expressions are to be taken literally, and that the bread and wine are, when the words are pronounced by the officiating priest, changed, as to their substance, into the real flesh, blood, and Divinity of Christ—this is palpably opposed to the idiom of the original tongues, and indeed of all languages, by which the sign or token has the designation of the object to which it refers. It is diametrically opposed to

the evidence of our senses, which declares that no such change has taken place in the elements. The sacred penmen expressly speak of the elements after the words were spoken, equally as before—as bread and wine. If the change for which Romanists contend took place at the time, and there were obviously not two bodies of the Saviour present, in partaking of the elements, the disciples must have eaten and drunk the body and blood of him who sat with them, and to whom He handed the material symbols. Now, that His risen body is in heaven, it must at the same time be present on earth—materially broken, divided and eaten wherever the Eucharist is dispensed ! A like contradiction to all evidences of our senses, and absurdity, follows from Luther's doctrine of *Consubstantiation*, which teaches that the Saviour's material body—though not changed in substance, is present *in, with and under* the consecrated elements. This maintains the *ubiquity* of a material substance—a dogma opposed alike to all sensible evidence, and to the principles of true science—and whose tendency is to degrade the ordinance, by making it a carnal, instead of a spiritual feast.

When our Lord gave the bread and wine to His disciples, He added the significant words—“*Which is given for you*”—or, according to the Apostle—“*which is broken for you*”—and “*this cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you.*” He thus presents to faith Himself, as God's unspeakable gift to sinners, and He offers, in the most tender and affecting manner, His finished atonement, as the nourishment of our soul-life, and the substance of all spiritual enjoyment. The cup—or rather the wine in it, is the emblem of the blood by which the New Covenant is sealed and ratified, and through which all covenant blessings are conveyed, as by a testamentary deed, to the heirs of salvation. Here too the atoning effect of the Redeemer's death, and the wide extent and freeness of the blessed provision are impressively held forth. “*This is my blood which is shed for you*”—or, as Matthew gives it—“*which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.*” And when He finally said, in the act of distribution—“*Drink ye all of it*”—and the disciples taking the cup from the Saviour's hands, handed it to one another, till all had partaken, He duly intimated His will, that all who are invited to the Feast, are, by His authority, to drink of the wine, as well as to eat of the bread ; and that in giving the elements one to another, they

declare by significant action, their faith in the communion of saints.

After the sacred Feast was partaken of by the Saviour, and His chosen disciples, and the discourse which is recorded in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John was spoken—and the prayer offered, which is found in the 17th chapter, He, with the little company, left the Upper Chamber, and went out to the Mount of Olives, on His way to the scene of His agony; and before He went “they sung a hymn.” This was, doubtless, a part of the Great *Hallel hymn*, which was constantly sung by the Jews at the Passover, contained in Psalms cxiii. to cxviii. inclusive.* Thus were concluded the services of the First Communion season on earth, in which the Master of the Feast was present with His chosen disciples;—these were immediately followed by His agony in the Garden—His unjust trial and condemnation, and the crucifixion.

In reviewing the *circumstances* connected with the institution of the Lord's Supper, and considering the *time* in which it was first observed—“*The night in which He was betrayed*”—we may gather the most important and affecting instruction.

First—It proclaims the *Godhead of the Redeemer*, and His *amazing condescension and compassion towards His people*. The transition from the ritual of the Old Economy to the simple and more spiritual ordinance of the New—so easily and almost imperceptibly made, is analogous to Divine working in the kingdom of nature—by which night merges, through the opening twilight, into the risen day. The symbols employed so appropriate—and the language so simple and yet expressive, bespeak the infinite wisdom of the great Prophet of the Covenant. Then, the Saviour, when standing on the brink of inconceivable sufferings, which were perfectly fore-known to Him, speaks little or nothing about the embittered agonies, which, like floods, were gathering around His holy soul. He betrays no dismay in view of conflict and suffering; and He utters no words to evoke the sorrowful feelings or to draw forth the sympathies of His disciples. His discourse abounds with support and consolation of every kind for them,

* Even were it granted that the Hymn, sung at the close of the first Lord's Supper was one that was then first composed, this would furnish no argument in favour of employing human hymns in solemn worship, inasmuch as the Saviour, the great Prophet of the Covenant, was Himself the Author of Inspiration.

as if He was altogether oblivious of Himself. In the night on which He entered on His soul-agony, and in immediate preparation for it, He institutes a sacred and joyful Feast, to be afterwards observed by His people, for their comfort and growth in grace, in all places and circumstances, till the end of time ; guaranteeing that He would be present with thousands of assemblies, met at the same time, to reveal His glory, and confer the richest blessing. All this shows, in the clearest light, that He who instituted the Supper is Immanuel, God with us—that He appointed the ordinance in the manifestation of grace, wisdom and love that are truly Divine ; and that wherever it is observed according to His appointment, and in faith, He will be present to show forth His glory, and to confer an abundant blessing.

Secondly, the Lord's Supper *is a conclusive evidence of the truth of Christianity.* It proclaims in the most solemn and impressive manner, the great fundamental facts of our holy religion—that Jesus, the Son of God, was in our world in an humbled condition—that His character was one of majesty and authority, blended with unspeakable grace, and condescension and love—that He died a painful ignominious death, as an atoning sacrifice for lost sinners—and that thus He obtained eternal redemption for all that believe on and obey Him. These important truths are brought to lively remembrance in this ordinance, and it forms a main link in the chain of proof of their reality. There is evidence most abundant, that the Lord's Supper was instituted at the time specified by the Apostles, and not afterwards ; and that it was appointed to be a standing, perpetual monument of the great facts of our Lord's sufferings and death. Had it not been set up at the time mentioned in the Gospels, those who were called to observe it at a later period must have been sensible that it could not have been ordained in the circumstances recorded by the Evangelists ; and they could not possibly have believed it to be an ancient institution. The Primitive Church, either in the Apostolic age, or in that which immediately succeeded, could not have submitted to the observance of an institution which claimed to have dated from the death of Christ, if it was not then appointed. The three first Evangelists record the circumstances of the institution of the Lord's Supper, with much minuteness, and with such harmony and variety of statement that credible and independent witnesses may be expected to

manifest, in testifying to the same transaction; and subsequently, the Apostle Paul, guided by special revelation, endorses fully their testimony, while he summarises, and in some particulars enlarges it. In the *Acts of the Apostles*, there is the repeated record of the frequent observance of the Lord's Supper by the Primitive Christian church; and there are pointed references to the same practice in the Epistles of the New Testament. The Christian Authors of the first three centuries bear clear and full testimony to the frequent observance of the sacramental feast throughout the church in their day. Thus, *Justin Martyr*, about the middle of the second century, speaks of the Christians in Rome, both in the city and country, assembling for worship on the day that Christ rose from the dead—and says, “The writings of the prophets and apostles were publicly read, and the person presiding preached to the people, exhorting them to follow and perform the things which they had heard.” He adds—“After this, we all join in prayer, and then celebrate the sacrament; and those who are willing and able give alms.” Again, with greater fulness, the same writer, says—“The President having given thanks, and the people having expressed their assent, those whom we call *Deacons* give to each of those who are present a portion of the bread, which has been blessed, and of the wine mixed with water; and carry away some for them who are absent. And this food is called by us the *Eucharist*, of which no one may partake unless he believes that which we teach is true, and is baptized, and lives in such a manner as Christ commanded. For we receive not these elements as common bread, or common drink, but even as Christ Jesus, our Saviour. . . . had both flesh and blood for our salvation, even so we are taught that the food which is offered, by the digestion of which our blood and flesh are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the Apostles in the Memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have related that Jesus thus commanded—‘Do this in remembrance of Me: this is my body:—and that, in like manner, having taken the cup, and given thanks, He said—‘This is my blood,’ and that He distributed them to these alone.”* All history thus shows that the ordinance of the Supper could not possibly have been introduced into the church as a mere human contrivance.

* Justin Martyr's Works—Book II. pp. 97, 98—Quoted in Killen's Ancient Church, p. 482.

Only on the ground that it was appointed by the Saviour Himself, when He was about to die as a sacrifice for sin, and for the declared purpose of being a perpetual memorial of this, could it have been received in the church. The existence of this ordinance, and its observance from the earliest ages clearly involve the truth of Christianity. The transmission of this evidence by an outward impressive rite is striking, and admirably adapted to the object. As often as we observe it in a suitable manner, we give an open and powerful testimony to the great leading truths of Christianity; and especially do we attest that the doctrine of the Saviour's atonement is the grand central principle of the system, interwoven with all other parts of it, and fundamental to all its enlivening hopes.

Thirdly—It is an eminent means of *realizing the highest Gospel privileges*, and of *inspiring the most joyful hopes*. While believers perform the sacramental service in remembrance of Christ, He fulfils to them His assured word of promise, and gladdens their hearts by His gracious presence and by discoveries of His glory. As to the two travellers going to Emmaus, He blesses the provision, and is made “known to them in the *breaking of bread*”—their “hearts burn within” them—glow with celestial heat imparted. Or, as He appeared to the Eleven assembled together, He speaks “peace” to their hearts, and shows them “His hands and His side.” They are privileged to behold His glory as they are with Him “on the holy Mount” (2 Peter i. 20). “When the King sitteth at His table,” the spikenard” of the spouse—graces in the hearts of His people, are revived, and give “forth the smell thereof.”* The discouragements and fears under which they came up to the feast are removed. “The oil of joy is given them for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” The blessings of pardon and acceptance and peace are realized, and they are made to sit in heavenly places with Christ. The great benefits of the New Covenant are made known to their experience as their blessed inheritance, and are confirmed to them by lively seals. By “two immutable things” in which it was impossible for God to lie, they obtain “strong consolation,” having “fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them.”† The Lord's Supper, is in a peculiar sense, an act of the highest fellowship or communion. In partaking of the same bread and wine, we have a significant token

* Song i. 12.

† Heb. vi. 19.

of the joint participation of the same spiritual privileges with fellow-worshippers, and with all the redeemed. We appear at the Lord's table as one saved company—as one mystical body of saints in heaven and on earth. How happy is this fellowship in the same faith, and love and hope—in united prayer and praise—and in mutual sympathy and help and consolation! Above this communion of saints, and as that to which it immediately leads, is the fellowship with God in Covenant, which believers are privileged to enjoy in the sacrament of the Supper. This fellowship with a Three-One God is the highest spiritual enjoyment of saints on earth; and is the earnest and foretaste of that full, uninterrupted, and everlasting felicity which the redeemed shall enjoy in being heirs of God, in glory.

The privileges realized in commemorating the death of Christ in this sacrament are, at times, a designed preparation for painful trials, through and beyond which there are revealed to the soul the objects of bright and glorious hopes. As our Lord "desired" to keep the Feast with His disciples before He suffered, and His bitter agony began almost immediately after the sacred entertainment was concluded, so the servants of God are, not unfrequently, called to solemn and severe trials, when they go down from the mount of communion. The tribulations and sorrows of the wilderness—the onsets of the Tempter—personal and domestic afflictions—the troubles of the church—and the bed of death, with the grave, and its gloom and loneliness, are before even those who have found Christ in His own ordinance, and who have received precious blessings in communion with Him. For all such trials, this sacred ordinance, when rightly observed, furnishes the most suitable preparation. We have in it the lively remembrance of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us—who in His death conquered all our enemies, and unstinged trouble and death, and who says with the most tender condescension—"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* If we really have fellowship with Christ at His table, we are made to feel that we are one with Him; and we may go forth willingly to bear His reproach, and to suffer for His sake, whatever He is pleased to appoint,—assured that if we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together. Nothing in life or death can separate us from His

* John xvi. 33.

love. All things now and hereafter must work together for our good. The spiritual food which we receive in the feast on earth is designed to encourage and strengthen us to go forward to the higher feast in glory. Death to us is conquered by the death of Christ; and the risen and ascended Saviour has led captive all that could bring us into captivity. When engaged at the ordinance, and as we come away from it, we may take all encouragement from His own gracious words to His disciples (Luke xxii. 29, 30)—“Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

CHAPTER V.

THE GENERAL DESIGN, ENDS AND IMPORTANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE time and affecting circumstances in which the ordinance of the Supper was first instituted—the importance attached to its observance by apostolic precept and example—the devout regard shown to it in all past ages by the church—and the edification and comfort which believers have ever professed to have derived from partaking of it should lead us to seek diligently after a right understanding of its design and ends. For ourselves there are few things of greater importance than to be acquainted with the nature and uses of this sacrament, and to know in what way it is efficacious of the purposes for which it was appointed by the blessed Head of the church.

Among the principal ENDS contemplated in the institution and perpetual observance of the Lord's Supper may be mentioned:—

1. To keep up the lively *remembrance of Christ's love to His people*, displayed especially in *His atoning sacrifice*. With peculiar emphasis, our Lord commanded His assembled disciples when He dispensed to them the symbols of His dying love—"THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME." "*This is my Body which is broken for you.*" "*This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*" The doctrine of Christ's Person, as Godman, and the vicarious work of Christ on earth—completed by His death on Calvary—are fundamental and indispensable to the whole matter of the sinner's salvation. These are held out to us in the most lively and affecting manner in the ordinance of the Supper. We see herein, as in a glass, the enormous evil and demerit of sin, and the Divine way of pardon and moral purification. In it, Christ Jesus is set forth "evidently crucified" among us. In the language of one of the Continental Protestant Confessions (*Helvetian*). In this sacrament—"Our Lord directs our faith and trust to His perfect sacrifice once offered on the cross, as to the only ground and foundation for salvation."

The material elements, and sacramental actions are singularly adapted to hold forth the crucified Saviour, and the benefits of His sacrifice to the faith and love of His people. He who knows our infirmities, and the numerous temptations that assail us from within and without, condescends to bring down divine mysteries to the level of our capacities ; and that they may the more deeply impress us, to present them to our different senses. Truths the most weighty and important are, in this ordinance, in some sense, made *visible and tangible*; and we touch, taste and handle the eternal life manifested. The atoning death of Christ on the cross is to be the special and pre-eminent theme of our meditation, and object of faith in this sacrament. The whole administration—the exhibition of the elements—the words spoken—and the actions of those who partake of it, have this end directly in view. When this is not made prominent—whether in the discourse of him who dispenses it, or in the thoughts and actions of those who receive it, the ordinance is perverted from its grand purpose ; and no blessing may be expected to accompany its administration.

2. Again, the sacrament of the Supper is designed to exhibit and promote the *unity and fellowship of Christians with the Redeemer, and with one another.* The sacrament is to believers a sign and badge of separation from the world, and of incorporation in the body of Christ. He assumed our nature that His people might, in the fullest sense, be one with Him. As the High Priest of our profession, He was substituted for them ; and He bore their sins on His own body on the cross. He is held forth in the sacrament, as a crucified and yet living Redeemer, and His people are impressively reminded of their fellowship with Him in His sufferings, and of their oneness with their glorious Head in His life in glory. United to Him by the Spirit, they come to His table as living members of His body ; and, at the same time, they appear as friends and brethren—"all members, one of another." The intimate union of believers with Christ and with fellow-saints is taught in the most explicit terms in the New Testament. "Now are ye the Body of Christ, and members in particular." "He is Head over all things to His church, which is His body—the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."* In partaking of the sacramental emblems, we profess openly our union to Christ in His death, and in His glorified life. In receiving with our mouth the

* 1 Cor. xii. 27 ; Eph. i. 22.

symbols of His broken body and shed blood, they are incorporated with us, and become a part of our bodily substance. Thus, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and through faith, we become one with Him—identified with the true body of the Redeemer that suffered on Calvary, as we are represented by His glorified body in Heaven. Believers united to Christ, are by the same living faith, united also to the true church, which is His body, and to all the living members of the church in heaven and earth. They have one life, strength, nourishment and hope. They are united in the same worship—bound together in one communion and interest ; as they are travelling by the same pilgrim-road to the same heavenly country. “We being many are one bread, and one body ; for we are all partakers of that one bread.”* “Speaking the truth in love, we grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ : from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”†

3. This ordinance is *a precious means of grace, serving for spiritual nourishment, and for stimulating and invigorating the Divine life in the soul.* The death of Christ, applied by the Spirit, is not only the grand means of quickening them that are spiritually dead—it is the appointed provision for all their spiritual nourishment. The Saviour Himself declares this to be the only and all-sufficient way of strengthening and perfecting the Divine life in the soul. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father ; so he that eateth me shall live by me.”‡ While these declarations have a primary reference to the habitual appropriation of Christ, and His benefits by a living faith, they may likewise be properly applied to the spiritual nourishment obtained through participation in the sacrament—which we enjoy by faith in the great doctrines that are therein set forth and illustrated. This sacra-

* 1 Cor. x. 17.

† Eph. iv. 15, 16.

‡ John vi. 53, 54.

ment, as distinguished from baptism, is the ordinance appointed for our nourishment in the covenant, and therefore it is to be frequently administered. As the Israelites, when about to leave Egypt, were provided in the passover with a refreshing and invigorating feast, so are believers—the true Israel, strengthened for their journey heavenward by feeding by faith on the great atoning sacrifice. And as the manna rained from heaven was wilderness food, and water from the smitten rock supplied drink in abundance, that God's people might be strengthened for their pilgrimage to the land of promise, thus believers, sustained by the doctrines of Christ's incarnation and death, go from strength to strength unweariedly till they appear before the Lord in Zion (Ps. lxxxiv. 7). The sacramental feast brings us into full view of this blessed provision for the nourishment of our immortal souls. It forcibly reminds us of our continual need, and of the abundant rich provision which has been graciously made for supplying our spiritual wants. By partaking of this provision, our spiritual views are enlarged—faith is increased—love is excited—and we are filled with “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” We are renewed in holiness after the image of Him that created us. We are brought to feel intensely the odiousness of sin, and as we name Christ's name, we learn to depart from iniquity. Led by the Redeemer into the banqueting-house, and encircled by the banner of His love, we meditate with delight on His excellence, and are penetrated with the vehement desire to be like Him. Thus, in the sacrament, believers, when the things which are Christ's are revealed to them by the Spirit—as they feed upon His body and blood by faith—and as they come away from it, become conscious of renewed spiritual strength, derived from His gracious work and promises. Adorned with “the beauties of holiness,” they are fitted to be a blessing here, and are prepared for the state of perfection in glory.

4. The sacrament of the Supper is designed to *confirm our trust and confidence in a living Redeemer*, and to be a *preparation for His second coming*.

The Saviour, in the first institution of the ordinance, and in every instance of its due observance, exhibits Himself as the grand Object of all heartfelt confidence. His words are still to His people when they come to the Feast, as they were to sorrowing disciples met in the upper chamber, on the night of His betrayal—“Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in

God, believe also in me.”* He is displayed as worthy of the highest trust—and this for support, deliverance, and comfort, and for all the blessings of salvation. He is Immanuel, God with us. He died to take away the curse, and to purchase eternal redemption for His people. In condescending kindness and love, He comes Himself to dispense the stores of the covenant, and to confer plentifully the blessings which He procured for men, “even for the rebellious.” This ordinance He instituted, to be the appointed means of intercourse and blessing; and as He invites the people to it, He gives the freest welcome to participate in the ample provision He has made for their spiritual wants of whatever kind. “I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse. . . . Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”†

The trust which the Saviour is wont to confirm to His servants in the sacrament is the confidence of the heart in His power and love, against all that they dread, and for all the benefit and blessing that they can possibly need. It is for deliverance from all enemies and fears; it is trust for pardon, peace, and acceptance; and for all blessings of grace and providence for themselves and others—for time and eternity. The name of Him who provides the Feast, and who presides over its dispensation is JEHOVAH JIREH—“the Lord will be seen providing.” Believers are brought up to the mount, that they may “receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.” By the work of the Spirit, not unfrequently they obtain the assurance of eternal bliss. Their privilege is to have “life in the risen Saviour.” The nourishment which believers receive from His body broken, and His blood shed, they will always require until He shall come again at the Judgment; and their confidence in Him as their living Saviour has special reference to His future glorious appearance. “As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.” This declares that the exhibition of Christ’s death by the sacramental symbols, and the observance of the ordinance will continue till the consummation of all things, and will only cease at His second coming. It is designed to express stedfast belief in His coming as the Sovereign Judge of all, and the joyful confidence of the righteous in Him

* The most eminent critics have generally agreed that both members of the verse should be taken in the imperative form.

† Song v. 1.

as their Judge, and preparation for His coming. Hereafter, He will appear "the second time without sin unto salvation." His advent will be the day of "*the revelation of Jesus Christ,*" and the time of "*the manifestation of the sons of God.*" He who hung upon the cross, and bled and died for them—He whom they now see in the symbols of His great sacrifice—"this same Jesus" will come to glorify their risen bodies, and receive them to His everlasting kingdom. It will be the day of the glorious appearance of the heavenly Bridegroom and of their everlasting espousals. When He shall appear, His saints shall appear with Him in glory. In the ordinance of the Supper, our privilege is to behold the glory of the King; and we should cherish all those spiritual desires and affections that will be excited into most vigorous exercise, when we shall behold Him coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. We should "love His appearance"—looking for and hastening to the coming of the day of the Lord. Going forth to meet Him, at the Feast, we should earnestly desire His presence, and hail His glorious manifestation. "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."*

* Song, ii. 17; Isa. xxv. 9.

CHAPTER VI.

DOCTRINAL VALUE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, OR THE GREAT DOCTRINES IMPRESSIVELY TAUGHT IN THE ORDINANCE.

FROM what has been already stated respecting the nature, design and ends of the sacrament of the Supper, it will be seen that the ordinance is of no small doctrinal value. In its appointment and institution, it presents a testimony to the world—the fullest and most striking—in behalf of the grand fundamental doctrines of the Bible; and it teaches in the most affecting manner, the grand truths of the scheme of human redemption. When to the lessons of the written word, the use of visible symbols is added, the attention is forcibly arrested, and the impression becomes more deep and abiding. External symbols are a kind of *natural language*, which by engaging the different senses, tends powerfully to enforce the instruction conveyed, and to produce its proper influence. Besides, in the sacrament of the Supper, Christians make before the world, a public, social and separate profession of their faith in Christ, and hope of salvation through Him. No other ordinance does this so openly and fully. In attending upon the preaching of the Word and public worship, believers mingle with the crowd; in the family, the worship is social and separate, but not public;—but in the Supper, these three parts of the church's distinctive profession unite, and stand forth in visible manifestation before the world. Christians therein declare, in the most public and impressive manner their faith in Christ, and heartfelt trust in His salvation. This language of believing experience and of joyful avowed hope, uttered in the action of commemorating Christ's death, it has been justly said is “a better testimony to His grace, and sinks a deeper conviction into the hearts of the profane, than years of empty profession or angry controversy.”*

While the Lord's Supper was not instituted for the purpose of being a *converting* ordinance, but mainly for the edification of believers, and the confirmation of their faith, and the

* Mason on Frequent Communion, pp. 19, 20.

strengthening of other Christian graces, yet, when devoutly observed by the Lord's people, it proclaims silently, but most impressively, the surpassing excellence of the believer's portion—the covenant-provision for man's salvation—and the urgent need to all of a personal interest in this provision. To the members of the church generally, and especially to believing communicants, the ordinance of the Supper presents in the most vivid and attractive manner, the grand fundamental truths of the Gospel. Significant action is added to the word. All the great doctrines of the plan of salvation are brought into view, and may be seen in their grandeur and relative proportions. The sacramental table is the Gospel feast fully prepared in the mountain of the Lord's house—spread with royal dainties—loaded with “fat things full of marrow, and wines on the lees well refined.” By attendance on the ministrations of the word, we may come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; but those who wait with spiritual desire on the Supper attain to enlarged experimental acquaintance with the great doctrines of salvation. In God's light they see light. “Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,” they are transformed into His moral likeness. They “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

The church is established in the earth for a purpose of the highest importance—that of preserving, holding forth and diffusing Divine truth. To her have been entrusted “the oracles of God;” and a principal end of her mission is to keep them as a sacred deposit—guard jealously their purity, and promote their universal diffusion. According to Apostolic testimony, the church is “the Pillar and ground of the truth” *—not as giving authority to the truth, or as being the foundation on which it rests—but as a monumental pillar on which it is inscribed, to display it to the world, and to hold it forth as a light to dispel the surrounding darkness. Divine ordinances, as well as revealed doctrines and laws, have been committed to the church; and these she is required to preserve pure and entire, and to transmit incorrupt to succeeding generations. The grand truths which compose the scheme of human redemption form the inscription on this monumental pillar. On their stedfast belief, and full and clear display, the church's spiritual life and prosperity mainly depend. Divine ordinances are established in the church for the purpose of embodying in

* 1 Tim. iii. 15.

acts of worship and life these truths ; and according as they are diligently and purely observed, the church's testimony is effective of good, and saving truths believed become sanctifying and transforming.

Of all the ordinances of our holy religion none is fitted to be more efficient for teaching the unspeakable importance of precious gospel truth, and for ensuring its universal spread and triumph than the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Instituted by the Head of the church at a season of peculiar solemnity—the crisis of the world's history and of human redemption, in connection with the richest manifestations of His glory, and with the hopes and destinies of His people to the end of time ; this ordinance may be justly regarded as designed to exhibit the grand doctrines of Christ and His Gospel with the clearest evidence and greatest power, for enlightening the mind, renewing the heart, and transforming the moral nature. Rightly observed according to its scriptural institution, and in its simplicity, and purity, it must ever prove the most efficient teacher of the great doctrines which are fundamental to the salvation of multitudes who are to be brought to glory.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper may be viewed as a vivid exhibition of the *wondrous plan of salvation in the covenant of grace*. The spiritual provision which it symbolically presents is that of God's sovereign love and grace, made for the recovery of lost sinners, and for enriching the redeemed who are to be brought home to glory. As a sacramental seal, it brings into view the "counsel of peace" of the Persons of the Godhead, before the foundation of the world. The bread in the sacred feast figuratively represents "the true Bread which came down from heaven, and gave His life for the world." The sacramental cup is declared to be "the New Covenant (Testament) in Christ's blood,"—the blessed provision of God's love and mercy for pardon and cleansing, and the grand means of confirming the enjoyment of all New Covenant blessings. That which is spiritually presented in the ordinance, and brought near to be appropriated by faith is the abundant provision of the love of the covenant. The rich and inexhaustible stores of free grace are opened, and believers are bid welcome to eat, till they are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house, and to drink of "the river of God's pleasures." At the sacramental table, believers come to the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood

of sprinkling, which assures them of pardon and acceptance. The "banner of covenant love" is round about them. Grace, as a glorious sovereign, reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Christ Jesus the Lord. "Exceeding great and precious promises"—sealed by the blood of the Testator—all "yea and amen in Him," are given, and believers become heirs of the promise, and are thus made "partakers of the Divine nature." When admitted to the feast, "the secret of the Lord" is with them, and there is shown to them His covenant. As they "join themselves to the Lord," and "take hold of His covenant," they are "made joyful in His house of prayer, and their offerings and burnt-offerings are accepted on His altar."* Brought into "the bond of the covenant" by "two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie"—His word and oath in covenant, they obtain strong and everlasting consolation. God Himself is made known as "the portion of their cup and inheritance," and they are assured of the certain and full possession of all future good and blessedness. "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me : for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth ; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."† The sacrament furnishes a bright and affecting display of God's covenant-love in the gift of His Son for the salvation of the world. Its language is, "Herein is love"—gratuitous, unparalleled, everlasting love—"Not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son to be a propitiator."‡ The ordinance is appointed as a rich feast, in which Divine love to man is seen in its brightest, and most amazing manifestation ; in which believers delight themselves in God—and as they "taste and see that the Lord is gracious," are enabled to say, "We love Him, because He first loved us." "His mouth is most sweet; yea, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved and my Friend."§ In a special sense, the doctrine of salvation through the covenant of grace is—

i. *The doctrine of the Person and offices of the Redeemer;* and this is set forth with remarkable clearness, as all-important in the sacrament of the Supper. "Great is the mystery

* Isa. lvi. 6, 10. † Isa. liv. 9, 10. ‡ 1 John iv. 10. § 1 John iv. 19; Song v. 16.

of godliness : God was manifest in the flesh, seen of angels, justified in the Spirit.”* Everything connected with the first institution and observance of the Lord’s Supper proclaims the glory of Christ as a Divine Saviour. When He gave directions to His disciples to prepare the Passover, He displayed omniscient knowledge, and evinced His sovereign control over the human heart. His divine condescension and majesty were apparent in the spirit He manifested—in the words of grace and truth that He spoke—and in the blessings which He promised to confer. He could not possibly have instituted an ordinance to commemorate Himself, and have given the assurance that He would be present with His people in all places wherever they assembled to celebrate it, to the end of time, if His name were not Immanuel, God with us, “Jesus the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” The glory of the grace and truth of the Eternal Word were displayed in the most attractive lustre, as He companied with the apostles at the last Supper. The words which He spake, and His actions towards enemies, in the time of His lowest abasement, showed clearly His eternal power and Godhead. The ordained memorial of the Saviour’s death bears the most explicit testimony to the first grand article of the “great mystery of godliness”—“God manifest in the flesh.” Wherever the sacramental feast is duly observed, His divine glory is brightly manifested—discovering love that infinitely transcends that of all creatures—performing gracious acts, and conferring blessings which can only flow from infinite and inexhaustible fulness. Nor less conspicuously in the sacrament are displayed the precious *offices* of the Saviour as Mediator of the covenant. As King and Head of the church, He instituted the Lord’s Supper. He presides with sovereign authority over every part of the administration, and from His throne and sceptre commands the blessing. As the “daughters of Zion” go forth to meet Him, they behold Him with the crown wherewith His mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals, in the day of the gladness of His heart.”† The words of institution which the Redeemer speaks—as well as the gospel messages uttered in the administration of the Supper, are the teaching of the great Prophet of the covenant, whose gracious invitations and promises are spoken to the heart, and believers recognize them as the voice of the Beloved. The Comforter effectually teaches,

* 1 Tim. iii. 16.

† Song iii. 11.

by bringing to seasonable remembrance all things whatsoever Jesus has spoken. Believers, taught of God, "have an unction from the Holy One, and understand all things."* As the "Witness of the covenant," and an "Interpreter, One among a thousand," He leads them into all truth, and imparts to them all saving discoveries. They are given "the Morning Star"—the assurance that the night of spiritual blindness is past, and the harbinger of the perfect day.

2. *Christ's death, as an atoning sacrifice for sin,* is exhibited as an important part of the instruction communicated in the ordinance of the Supper. In the formula of institution, as given by the apostle in his letter to the Corinthian church, it is declared, "Ye do show the Lord's death till He come."† The verb in the original employed here (*καταγγελλετε*) properly means to *announce, proclaim, or preach*; and has been regarded as a term transferred from the ordinance of the ancient pass-over, which the Supper was designed to supplant. Among the Jews, this was termed *Haggadah*, a *showing, or declaration* of the deliverance commemorated. In a similar sense, the Lord's Supper is to be observed as a special and eminent means of proclaiming or preaching the death of Christ, as a fact of transcendent importance, and the doctrine which it inculcates as fundamental and most valuable. The sacramental elements and actions all proclaim the sufferings and death of Christ, as being the grand object of representation in every part of the service. Deprived of a special and pointed reference to these, it is destitute of all proper import and significance. It was not the life or miracles of Christ, or an illustrious victory which He achieved—nor some preferment or honour conferred upon Him; but *His decease* that He appointed to be commemorated, and the cruel, ignominious and accursed death that He was to endure, which he ordained to be celebrated. The Supper instituted before His death took place was a *prophetic announcement* of it; and not only at first, but also in every subsequent observance of the ordinance, it was designed to be a vivid portraiture of the character, nature and ends of the Saviour's sufferings and death. The bread broken represented the sinless humanity of the Redeemer as a victim offered in the room of the guilty; the wine poured out symbolized the blood of Christ shed for the remission of sin. The whole ordained ritual of the sacrament proclaims the sa-

* 1 John ii. 20.

† 1 Cor. xi. 26.

crificial character of Christ's death; and this as the sole ground of deliverance from sin and its consequences, and of acceptance with God. Justly has it been remarked that, "in the preaching of the word, the church by its ministers proclaims to the world a crucified Saviour; but, in this ordinance, it speaks as a constituted Body, and in actions the most expressive, it professes its entire dependence upon the finished work of the Redeemer, and proclaims aloud its experience of its saving benefits."

That the death of Christ should be regarded as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin is essential to all right views of the scheme of human redemption, and is confirmed by the fullest, clearest testimony of Divine revelation. If He did not suffer as a true and proper sacrifice in the room of the guilty, then He was only a creature and not God. He did not fulfil the law for us, and His sufferings cannot avail us for pardon and acceptance with God. But the reiterated and uniform testimony of sacred Scripture—the types, prophecies, gospels and epistles—all with one voice proclaim Christ in His sufferings and death, the sinner's Substitute—the one great Sacrifice that for ever puts away sin, and procures eternal redemption for His people. "Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation." "It pleased the Father to bruise Him." He was "once offered to bear the sins of many." "Christ also hath once suffered for sins—the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." The death of Christ as a true and proper atonement for sin is the cardinal article of the Christian faith. The term *Substitution*, or *atonement*, in its comprehensive meaning, as designating the Saviour's sufferings and death, expresses the whole gospel. It implies the divinity of His person, and the voluntary character of His obedience and sufferings, and proclaims the sure and final salvation of all who are interested in His sacrifice. Appropriately and beautifully has it been observed—"The death of Christ commemorated in the Supper, is the point in which the leading doctrines of redemption concentrate their rays, and where they shine with united lustre."^{*} The death of Christ as a Surety and Substitute for sinners was the grand end contemplated in the arrangements of the covenant of grace from eternity. This forms the brightest display of the love of God, in not sparing His own Son; and this is the noon-tide manifestation of the

* Mason on "Frequent Communion," Letter II.

Saviour's love, in giving Himself as "a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God," in behalf of the lost. The ransom paid, in the sufferings and death of Christ, was an adequate compensation to God's justice and violated law, for all the injuries inflicted by man's sin. It is the all-sufficient ground of forgiveness for the guilty—the foundation of full victory over all enemies and evils—the rich and inexhaustible source of all blessing and blessedness to the redeemed for time and eternity. The ordinance which so impressively exhibits the atoning death of Christ in its nature, design and ends—in which Christ is so conspicuously set forth—"evidently crucified among" His people, is of the last importance to be observed aright, and is ever replete with the most weighty and valuable instruction. Coming to it in faith, and with fervent spiritual desire—and feeling the attraction of the cross, we may well exclaim—"God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world." "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."*

3. Christ Jesus is exhibited in the ordinance of the Supper as *the exclusive and glorious Head of the Church*, and the *Fountain of all her blessings*. In the exercise of His mediatorial kingly office, He instituted all the sacraments. By His sole authority, He ordains the outward elements, and establishes the formal connection between the sacramental signs and the privileges and blessings which they signify. He appoints officers in His house to dispense the seals of the covenant—presides in every part of the administration—commands the Spirit, and confers the grace needful for all right observance—and He bestows an abundant blessing upon those whom He brings up to the Banqueting House. The presence of Christ as Zion's King is everything in the fellowship and blessing which are to be expected and realized in the sacramental feast. Here He comes forth in stately and comely majesty. For the suffering of death which He endured, He is beheld "crowned with glory and honour." His word is that "of a King in which there is power." As He rules among enemies, a "willing people" come to Him in the day of His power. The shout of a King is in the midst of them. He sits a King at His table, while the fragrance of holy graces

* Galatians vi. 14; Romans v. 11.

flows forth from those who enjoy the communion of His love. Everything in the ordinance displays the majesty, grace, and glory of Christ Jesus as King and Head of His church. He does princely acts, and with regal munificence, He satisfies the largest desires of His saints. They are brought to a royal feast, and are fed with food greatly blessed. Their enemies are clothed with shame as with a garment, while *they* are bid welcome to the rich and inexhaustible stores of His kingdom. The crown that He wears of universal dominion—of the government of His church—and of the individual salvation of His people, is seen flourishing upon Him. He is known in the ordinance as the loving, life-giving, exclusive Head of the church. In coming to it, His people, attracted by His beauty, are made “joyful in their King.” They ascribe to Him all the glory, and are encouraged to accept all blessings from His sceptre and throne. Their petitions and requests are granted—not to the half only, but—to the whole of the heavenly kingdom. “His head is as the most fine gold ; His locks are bushy and black as a raven.”* Thus they willingly confess Him as “Head over all things to His church”—“Head of all principality and power”—“King of kings, and Lord of lords”—Lord of the invisible world—“the King of glory.” From the Mediatorial headship of Christ, so fully and brightly displayed in this ordinance, flow forth all blessings to the church and the world. The stores of His kingdom, ever open, are inexhaustible. His sceptre is the “sceptre of righteousness”—and His saints, gathered to His throne, sit “with Him in heavenly places, and are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.” They share with Him all the dignity, and honour, and rich treasures of His kingdom. They reign with Christ on earth. From Him, united in closest and most endeared fellowship to His people, flow forth to the world abundant blessings. He is the “Desire of all nations”—the Seed of promise, in whom all kindreds of the nations are gathered and blessed. “His name shall endure for ever ; it shall be continued as long as the sun. Men shall be blessed in Him ; all nations shall call Him blessed.”†

4. The ordinance of the Supper displays *the application of the benefits of redemption*, and teaches *the great matters of subjective religion*. The atoning death of Christ was appointed for the purpose of conferring upon sinners of mankind benefits

* Song v. 11.

† Ps. lxxii. 17.

of unspeakable value; their enjoyment is represented in the ordinance. Of these pardon and acceptance with God occupy a prominent place. The wine used in the sacred feast symbolizes the blood of the covenant shed for the remission of sins, and for sealing the participation of covenant blessings; the reception of the elements by the communicant shows the way in which the purchased benefits become ours in actual possession. As the Israelites, when "they kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood," were delivered from the destruction that came upon Egypt, so the blood of Christ applied, frees from condemnation, and delivers completely from the power of the destroyer. Justified by His blood, we are saved from wrath through Him. The "wedding garment," that forms the only ground of our acceptance at the Marriage Feast, is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us for justification. The faith that justifies is also clearly exhibited in this ordinance. All dependence on human works or merit is seen to be wholly excluded. The provision made in the feast is, in the fullest sense, gratuitous. It is given without money and without price, to persons sinful and undeserving. The "sprinkling of blood" is kept by faith looking to the blood of atonement; and, like as the benefit was anciently enjoyed by eating the flesh of the Paschal Victim, so by faith appropriating Christ and His blessings, we have spiritual deliverance and eternal life. "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."* The Lord's Supper is thus an exposition of the fundamental doctrine of justification—the grand "article of a standing or a falling church." It teaches that we are justified through Christ's finished righteousness *meritoriously*, and by faith *instrumentally*—that we are the passive recipients of gracious benefits provided—and that being reconciled to God by the death of His Son, we are received into a state of stable and unalterable friendship. "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We are made to rejoice in Him whose name is "The Lord our Righteousness." "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory."†

The ordinance likewise declares the *necessity and nature of*

* John vi. 54, 57.

† Isa. xlvi. 24, 25.

sanctification by the Spirit. The table of the Lord is holy. The sacramental feast implies separation from the world lying in wickedness, and consecration to God's service. Those who are admissible to it before men must be free from gross sin, and must make a consistent profession of the truth. Real saintship is required by the Master of the feast, as essential to communion with Him and with fellow-believers in the ordinance. "The pure in heart alone see God." All who would ascend into the hill of God, and dwell in His holy place, must have "clean hands, and a pure heart"—they have "not lifted up their soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."^{*} Seeing Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, we must keep the feast, "not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."[†] Everything in the ordinance of the Supper reminds us of the indispensable necessity of holiness—and of the only means of its acquisition. By the truth proclaimed, we are sanctified; and by the sacrifice which is symbolically exhibited, sin is for ever put away. If we come "a willing people" in the day of power, we appear "in the beauties of holiness." All the spiritual fellowship that we enjoy is with God and His saints, in the exercise of holy graces. We are with Christ in "the Holy Mount"—and as we obtain through a glass near views of His glory, we are transformed into His image, as by the Lord the Spirit.[‡] The Spirit, the Comforter, whose covenanted office and work are to glorify Christ, and to take the things which are His and reveal them to His people, excites into lively exercises all holy graces. The fragrant spices flow forth, when the Beloved comes into His garden, to eat with His saints the pleasant fruits which He has himself matured and gathered. All the graces which the Spirit implants find in the Supper their appropriate objects; and stimulated into vigorous exercise, they shine forth with attractive splendour. The "mind that was in Christ Jesus" is seen in His people. They walk in faith, and love, and peace; they shine in meekness, patience, and self-consecration. This is the spirit of earnest, wrestling prayer—and they abound in joyful thanksgivings. As they stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion. His name is conspicuous upon their foreheads, and they become more and more assimilated to His moral likeness. They wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Gradually

* Ps. xxiv. 3, 4.

† 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

they put on meetness for the full inheritance of the saints in glory. Brought near to Christ now, and to the emblems of spiritual purification, they anticipate the perfection of sanctification in heaven. The death of Christ shown forth in the sacrament is the feast of His eternal love :—the end is their presentation to Himself in the beauty and splendour of perfect holiness. “Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it. . . . That He might present it to Himself a glorious church—not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”* The ordinance of the Supper, by exhibiting vividly the necessity of holiness, and the way in which the redeemed walk in it, is at once an important means of instruction on this subject—and a vivid portraiture of the perfection in holiness which the saints attain to in the heavenly kingdom. The Place of Communion on earth is like the scene of the *transfiguration*, where select disciples, as they behold the Redeemer’s glory, are filled with admiration and delight. “Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about is most holy. Behold this is the law of the house.”† And when the end of ordinances on earth shall have been fully attained, the saints brought home to heaven appear holy as God is holy. They “see His face in righteousness and are satisfied with His likeness.”‡ Nothing impure or imperfect has a place in the fellowship of glorified saints. “There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”§

Finally—the *Christian’s joys* and *blessed hopes* are largely realized and expressed in the Lord’s Supper. Spiritual joy arises in the soul from the actual possession of loved and desired spiritual objects ; and hope pointing to the future, sees good things as attainable, the object of assured expectation. Both these graces are fruits of the Spirit, and the certain effect of a living faith. In the feast of the Supper, believers, receiving the atonement, “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Coming to the altar of God, they “go to God, their exceeding joy”—and they know experimentally the grounds of holy rejoicing. They joy in God as their sure portion ; they rejoice in what He had done for them—in the endearing and blessed relations which He sustains toward them

* Eph. v. 25, 26. † Ezek. xlivi. 12. ‡ Ps. xvii. 15. § Rev. xxi. 27.

—and in the blissful prospects which He sets before them. They are made joyful in His house of prayer. Receiving and resting on Christ for all their salvation, they declare as the fruit of past experience and in “the full assurance of hope” for the future, “Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see Hm not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”* While the Lord's Supper was appointed as a means of showing forth His death to the world, and of teaching in the most effective manner the great truths of human redemption, and of believing experience, its frequent solemn observance is eminently fitted to build up believers in their most holy faith. It sets before them in the most affecting aspect Christ Jesus as the grand provision of the covenant—and the blessings of life and salvation through Him. It proclaims aloud the blessed truth—that “God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life”—and that sparing Him not, but delivering Him up for us all, “He will with Him freely give us all things.” In partaking of this provision, the great doctrines of the Gospel become to us matters of realizing and joyful expectation. They are our life, our joy, and hope and blessedness begun; and as we eat and drink in feasting with the King, we “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” We “have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” “Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”†

* 1 Pet. i. 8.

† Rom. v. 2; vi. 22.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COMMEMORATIVE CHARACTER OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

A DISTINCTION between the ancient Passover and the Lord's Supper has been sometimes stated by saying that the former was *prefigurative* and the latter *commemorative*. This statement can hardly be regarded as correct ; inasmuch as the Passover was expressly ordained to be a standing memorial to Israel of the deliverance from Egypt wrought for their fathers. But viewed as a sign and shadow of the good things of the Gospel, it was a significant prefiguration of the substitution of the Redeemer—of the benefits resulting from His death, and of the way in which these benefits are to be enjoyed. On the other hand, the Lord's Supper is eminently commemorative, designed as a precious memorial of the most wonderful Person —of His love and undertaking from eternity, and of the amazing work that He accomplished for the salvation of sinners. Considered in its institution and the truths which it proclaims, it is a memorial of God's rich grace to us ; but, in reference to our duty, it is given to us, in a special manner, that the great matters presented in it may occupy a chief place in our thoughts and affections, and be had in constant and vivid remembrance.

It is noteworthy and affecting to reflect that the two great ordinances of our holy religion, on which the existence and power of Christianity eminently depend, have both prefixed to their appointment, a command enjoining remembrance. These are THE SABBATH and the LORD'S SUPPER. In the one case, through the engagements and temptations of this present world, we are prone to overlook and undervalue the vast concerns of the soul, and to be unmindful of the great ends of the Sabbath rest ; and in the other, the sinfulness and ingratitude of our nature lead us to forget Christ, and His obedience and sufferings. The special command prefixed to both institutions loudly declares that, without their stated observance, the proper remembrance of the great truths which they were instituted to embody and impress would be prac-

tically forgotten or denied—the unspeakable blessings which they are designed to confer could not be obtained, and the benefits of revelation and of Christianity could not be enjoyed in our world. The remembrance enjoined in the ordinance of the Supper is much more than a mere exercise of memory in calling to mind the facts and doctrines of the Gospel. It is “*Heart-Memory*” that which the Comforter imparts, when He “teaches all things, and brings all things to remembrance,” whatsoever Christ has spoken to His people.* It consists in a living faith in the truths of the Word—in feeling their enlightening, quickening power, and in experiencing their abiding, purifying effects. We have fellowship with Christ in His obedience and sufferings—we walk as He also walked, and His life is perfected in us.

In the institution of the Supper, in giving both the elements to His assembled disciples, He said once and again—“*This do in remembrance of Me*”—or as the original words properly denote—“*as a monument or memorial of Me.*” The precept, taken in connection with the action, has been compared to the giving of a love-token, or memorial of friendship, by a dying friend, with the parting injunction, that, as often as the survivor looks on it, he would remember him. Or the observance of the ordinance may be regarded as a monument erected by a grateful people to a generous benefactor whose bounty relieved their distress and ministered to their necessities.† It is affecting to think that the Almighty Redeemer condescends to accept as the greatest monument raised to His honour in a sinful world, the acts of faith and love, and holy dedication expressed in the sacrament of the Supper, of thousands of His humble, believing people. This observance serves to keep alive and perpetuate the memory of the Saviour and His work in the church and in the world. It is admirably fitted to excite and revive the suitable remembrance of Him in our minds—to lead us to think of Him habitually and gratefully—and to keep us at all times from forgetfulness of His amazing condescension and transcendent love. The solemn observance of the Lord's Supper is an eminent means of diffusing the

* John xiv. 26.

† One of the finest monuments in England, raised to a public benefactor, is that which was erected by the contributions of the working classes to the memory of the late SIR ROBERT PEEL, for his exertions in repealing the Corn Laws, and giving cheap food to the masses of the people.

savour of the Redeemer's name throughout the world, and of bringing the people of all nations to the obedience of faith, and to the enjoyment of the rich blessings of the Gospel. The resolution of faith in waiting upon the ordinance is—"I will make Thy name to be remembered in all generations ; therefore shall the people praise Thee for ever and ever."* And thus shall yet be fulfilled the bright prediction—"His name shall endure for ever ; His name shall be continued as long as the sun ; and men shall be blessed in Him ; all nations shall call Him blessed."†

This remembrance of Christ in the Lord's Supper is—

First of all—the remembrance of *His Person as God-man—Immanuel, God with us.* It is only as we entertain proper views of the Person of the Saviour, that we can know the mystery of His love and condescension—that we can understand the testimony of the sacred writers when they speak concerning His sufferings and death, and that we can properly account for the institution of the Supper, as a perpetual ordinance in the church. That the death of a mere creature should be appointed to be kept in remembrance by a solemn public act of worship to the end of time is surely not to be expected as a matter of Divine prescription ; and that, moreover, the Redeemer should assure His people of His presence with them, at all times and in all places, where they would meet to observe it, is wholly inconsistent with His position and character if He is only a finite creature, however exalted. But when He is presented as the incarnate Son of God—the Word made flesh and dwelling among us, we have the highest reason, and the most constraining motive for keeping the Sacramental Feast as a memorial of Him. The first article of the "Mystery of godliness" is this, "God was made manifest in the flesh." ‡ Angels that excel in glory, celebrated His birth in our world, as with profound wonder they contemplated their Maker become an infant of days. They ever "desire to look into the things," that pertain to the Person of Christ—to His sufferings and consequent glory. The Person of the Redeemer is the grand theme of adoring praise to saints and holy angels in heaven. It is eminently fitted to be the chief subject of remembrance and of admiring contemplation to believers as they come to the sacramental feast. He who fills heaven and earth with His glory—and who is Head of all principality and power

* Ps. xlv. 17.

† Ps. lxxii. 17.

‡ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

—Jehovah's Fellow—is man's Brother. While “the doors” of ordinances and of His people's heart are lifted up, He comes in as “the King of glory.” He is at the same time united to them in the most endearing relations. He is their living Head—their compassionate Elder Brother—their most loving Husband, and everlasting Portion. This ordinance displays Him in those high offices and tender relations, as He reveals Himself in the breaking of bread, and condescends to sit with His people at His table. How amazingly wonderful is such condescension! As His people go forth to welcome Him who comes in God's name to save them, it is most befitting that they should raise a monument to His matchless Person. As they remember that God has “*become* their *salvation*,” the thought is calculated to inspire them with the deepest awe and reverence—to animate them with the strongest confidence—and to yield to them the most exquisite spiritual enjoyment.

2. *His eternal love, and Surely undertaking in the covenant* are chief objects of remembrance in the Lord' Supper. The love of God in Trinity was the originating cause of human salvation, and of all the provisions made for its accomplishment. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* The love of the Saviour especially towards the objects of His mercy, is First and Last in the matter of bringing many sons to glory. This love eternal, sovereign, gratuitous and unchangeable, moved Him to become Surety in the covenant—brought Him down from heaven to earth, and led Him to suffer and die, in the room of the lost and guilty. His death on Calvary was the noon-tide, eclipsing display of the great love of Christ. “He loved us and gave Himself for us.” The bestowment on His people of all the benefits of His purchase is the outgoing of His gratuitous love; and all the privileges of the Gospel, and the blessings of which they are made partakers in time and eternity are its precious fruits. This ordinance is, in a peculiar sense, a “feast of love”—as therein, Jesus sets forth by lively and affecting symbols, His surety-engagement in behalf of sinners—the greatness of the sacrifice which He made for their redemption, and the constancy and tenderness of His affection towards them. Here He “rests in His love, and joys over them with singing;”† and here as His people meditate on the unspeak-

* John iii. 16.

† Zeph. iii. 17.

able love of the Saviour towards them, and feast on the blessed provision of the covenant, they express heartfelt desires and holy resolutions—"Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth; for Thy love is better than wine." "We will be glad, and rejoice in Thee, we will remember Thy love more than wine. Because of the savour of Thy good ointments, Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love Thee." *

3. His *Incarnation, work and character on earth* will ever form the *subjects of grateful and joyful commemoration*. The elements and actions in the Lord's Supper impressively remind us of the various steps of the Saviour's lowly abasement. "For us men, and for our salvation," He became incarnate, and was "the child born" in the lowest earthly condition. "For our sakes He became poor." In His position on earth, He voluntarily stooped down to be a partaker of flesh and blood—and to share in the privations and sufferings of the meanest of His people. Through His whole life on earth, He was a Sin-bearer, and hence He was all along a sufferer—the "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"—the Man that saw and experienced affliction, the heaviest and of every kind "by the rod of God's anger." His work on earth was the fulfilment of His Surety-undertaking. He came to do the will of His Father, and to finish His work. His obedience—voluntary, spotless and perfect, was that of a bond-servant. It was the work of the Second Adam—the covenant Head of elect sinners, wrought out in their room and stead, presented by their Representative and Substitute, and not merely or chiefly as their example. He came to "fulfil all righteousness," to which His engagement in the covenant pledged Him. At the close of His life of active obedience, He said, as He addressed the Father—"I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." † For His people, He "brought in an everlasting righteousness," and He is ever "the end of the law for righteousness to all that believe on Him." Every precept of the law the Saviour obeyed in the room of His people; every ordinance of the church He kept pure and entire. As the Father's elect servant, He performed the most menial services of the House in the highest exercise of all holy graces. Thus, in fulfilling the good pleasure of the Father, He poured the flood of a high illustration over the law and moral government of God, and upon all the Divine perfections. "The

* Song i. 2-4.

† John xvii. 4.

Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake. He hath magnified the law, and made it honourable." *

The *Character* of Christ, manifested on earth, equally as His work of obedience, must ever to His saints be a theme of devout and endeared remembrance. In it are blended and displayed in attractive lustre all holy graces. It is the embodiment of all moral excellencies, peculiarly fitting Him for the offices He sustained, and for all the work which He came to accomplish. Majesty and condescension—spotless holiness and tender pity and compassion—heroic decision and fortitude—with meekness, patience and perseverance, marked His whole life on earth. The law of God was within His heart. Devoted love to God, and tender love to man reigned in His soul and was the principle of His perfect obedience. Holy, consuming zeal for the honour of God, and for the purity and prosperity of the church, actuated Him in all His ministry on earth. He went about doing good. It was His meat and drink to do the will of His Father and to finish His work. The tenderness of His sympathy and compassion for the afflicted and bereaved; His meekness and patience in suffering; and His wisdom, love and faithfulness in all His intercourse with His chosen disciples, exhibit His character as ever fitted to excite admiration, and to elicit cordial affection and confidence. Christ Jesus lived in our world only for the glory of the Father, and the good of mankind. The right remembrance of such a spotless and attractive character is to study and imitate it. It is presented to us as our all-perfect model, to be transcribed in our lives, and to be reflected in our death. Only as we become like Him, can we hope to be with Him, here or hereafter. When we approach to the ordained memorial of the Saviour's character and work, we should seek that "the mind which was in Christ" should be also in us. We are called to "walk as He also walked," and " beholding His glory, we become changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." †

4. The *sufferings and death* of Christ are designed to be principal subjects of remembrance at the Sacramental Feast. For this purpose mainly was the ordinance instituted, and its observance enjoined. "*Ye do show forth His death till He come.*" All the elements and sacramental actions were prescribed for this end. The bread broken—the wine poured out

* Isa. xlii. 21.

† 2 Cor. iii. 18.

—those given to the communicants, with the words declaring that His body was broken for them, and His blood was shed for the remission of their sins—all are designed to exhibit the Saviour's death as the culminating act of His holy obedience—as the grandest display of His inconceivable love, and the fullest exhibition of the elements of His character, and of the great principles of His life. Considered either in relation to His undertaking in the covenant—His love and submission to the Father—the Father's justice, holiness and truth—or the Saviour's love and mercy for sinners, the death of Christ is ever worthy to fill our thoughts, excite in us the highest emotions of gratitude and joy, lead to the deepest penitential feelings, and draw forth heartfelt trust and confidence. In faithfulness to His Surety-engagement, He willingly laid Himself on the altar of sacrifice, and yielded His soul to death under the curse. In supreme love to the Father, He obeyed unto the death of the Cross; and His grand and only concern was to do His will and glorify His name. In the death of Christ, Jehovah spared not His own Son. Divine justice and holiness were displayed in the brightest and most awful manifestation, when the victim for man's transgression was the only begotten Son of God—when it pleased Him to bruise Him and put Him to grief, and to make His soul an offering for sin. God then appeared transcendantly “glorious in holiness,” and in His love for lost sinners, when He found such a costly Ransom; and He attested the heinous character and fearful demerit of sin, by exacting the full penalty from the spotless Substitute. The glory of Christ's sufferings is seen chiefly in their *substitutionary character*, and in the exercise of the holy graces with which they were endured. He took our place in law. It was our sins He bore. The punishment that we deserved, He suffered. Our sorrows He carried. The Lord laid on Him the iniquities of us all. “He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”* Can we ever look upon the pierced and bleeding Saviour, and think of His matchless love in dying for sinners, and rebels, and not be profoundly affected? Can we contemplate the outflow of His mercy and compassion for the lost and perishing—seen in His bloody sweat, and in the scars of His sacred body, and heard in the groans and strong cries

* Isa. lii. 5.

of His agonized Spirit, and not have the heart melted to penitence, and love, and gratitude, so as to have all other objects excluded, and the image of the Prince of sufferers filling the whole heart? Can we behold the meekness and patience of the suffering Saviour—His pity for enemies even when they mocked and crucified Him—His tenderness towards His mother and His disciples—the display of His authority and the triumph of His mercy to the dying malefactor—His victory over death and all enemies, when, with the loud voice of a Conqueror, He exclaimed—“*It is finished*”—and not cherish the most vivid and grateful remembrance of the glorious Sufferer.

In commemorating the sufferings and death of Christ, it is of the last importance to entertain right views of the *nature, character* and *ends* of these sufferings. As He voluntarily assumed the legal place of those whom He came to redeem, and their sins were laid upon Him, He suffered all that they deserved to suffer—penal woes inflicted from every quarter—from the wrath of a sin-avenging God—from the power of devils and from the malice of wicked men. “He redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us.” The wrath of Jehovah lighted upon every part of His person—upon His sinless body, and upon His holy soul. In the brief period of His sufferings, He endured what was equivalent to an eternity of punishment—the dignity of His person, as the God-man giving infinite worth to His obedience unto death. While it is to be admitted that the bodily anguish endured by the Saviour in His crucifixion was intense, it is yet observable that the sacred writers in recording them, do not dwell on the bodily sufferings, as the chief matter in our Lord's cruel and ignominious death, nor do they ever make the least attempt to excite feeling on this particular aspect of the sorrows of the suffering Saviour. To dwell chiefly on the bodily anguish connected with the Cross, and to represent the *material blood* shed by the Redeemer, as the whole or the principal cause of our salvation—as is done by some preachers and writers in our day, can only have the effect of exciting natural feelings, while it keeps out of view the true nature and ends of Christ's dying agony. Like the impression produced by Popish pictures or crucifixes, it excites horror or sympathy, while the spiritual effects of contemplating the cross of Christ are unknown. The sacred penmen speak of the *mental* anguish of the Redeemer's sufferings, as the chief element in His atoning death. The in-

conceivable agony which He endured in the garden, when He "sweat as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground"—the thick darkness that fell upon His soul when the Father's face was hidden from Him—the assaults of Satan which He encountered—and an overpowering sense of the load of guilt and sin which He bore, caused to the Saviour the fearful mental woes which can never be adequately conceived or expressed. The "strong crying and tears," which accompanied His sacrifice; and His agonized utterances in Gethsemane and Calvary—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death"—"If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me"—"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" show in the most impressive manner that the sphere of the Saviour's last sufferings lay in His holy soul, and that the moral cause of these sufferings—His people's sins, constitute their severity. Who can call to remembrance the unparalleled woes of the atoning death of Christ, and not regard with wonder and amazement the spotless Victim thus suffering for the guilty and the lost—and at the sametime, not see the tremendous evil of sin which required such a sacrifice to deliver from its power and defilement? We can only commemorate aright Christ's death, when we view it in the light of a substitutionary atonement for the sins of His people. It is the one perfect propitiation for sin—the substance of all ancient sacrifices—the grand means of reconciliation to God—the bright exhibition to the universe of God's justice and mercy harmonized in the salvation of sinners, even the chief, through the blood of the Lamb. When contemplating this wondrous provision, and appropriating the ransom provided, we have that peace with God which flows from pardon and reconciliation. We "also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."* And considering how the Divine mercy reaches us through the death of the Substitute; and how in it, the full claims of God's justice have been satisfied, and all His perfections glorified, we rest with entire confidence on the Great Sacrifice for full and complete salvation. "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."†

5. Finally, in the Lord's Supper we are called to remember the Redeemer as having *ascended to glory*—and His Mediatorial work in heaven. On the occasion when it was first observed,

* Rom. v. 11.

† Rom. v. 10.

the Saviour comforted His sorrowing disciples by the assurance that in His going away He would ever be mindful of them ; and that His departure would result in higher blessings to them, than they could possibly realize by His continual presence with them. “ Nevertheless it is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.”* For purposes the most important, the Saviour has been exalted to glory. While He receives the high reward stipulated for in the covenant, of His finished work on earth, He has ascended to heaven evidently for the benefit and blessing of His redeemed people. We converse with a friend when he is personally present ; we remember one with thought and affection who is absent. On every ground that can engage the thoughts of the mind, and draw forth the strongest and most loving desires of the heart, we are called to remember the risen and ascended Saviour at the Sacramental Feast. If He is indeed the Beloved of our souls, we will greatly rejoice that He has gone to the Father—that He is now “ Head of all principality and power,”—the “ Lord of glory.” We have the amplest assurance that, amid the splendour of his glorified state, He is ever mindful of His people on earth ; and that in all the work He is doing in heaven, their interests are near to His heart. When He had risen from the dead, and was about to depart, He sent to His disciples an endearing message, calling them brethren—“ I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.”† He ever lives as the Great High Priest of our profession, to advocate their case before the throne—to present their petitions and wants to the Father, and to confer on them the Spirit and all New Covenant blessings, until freed from all evil, they receive the crown of eternal salvation. As in the case of the ancient High Priest, their names are inscribed “on His breast-plate”—over His heart, and on “His two shoulder pieces”—emblematical of their being interested in His love and sustained by His mighty power. While He ministers in the heavenly sanctuary, the tinkling of the golden bells at the hem of His priestly garment—the sweet voice of His word—assures them that He is living and actively engaged on their behalf. They remember Him as they wait for Him in faith and prayer ; and they have the assurance of hope, that in the evening of the day, He will come forth—arrayed in garments of glory and beauty, and lift

* John xvi. 7.

† John xx. 17.

up His hands and bless them. Enthroned at the Father's right hand, He will continue to reign till all the enemies of His people have become His footstool. The whole administration He conducts with a view to the subversion of all evil, the destruction of all enemies, and the ultimate establishment of His glorious kingdom. The cases of individual saints, even the lowest, are ever present to His heart. As He sits a priest upon His throne, He is full of the warmest and most active sympathy. We have such an High Priest as can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He hears the cries and is acquainted with the secret groans of His afflicted people. He ever cares for them. "In all their affliction He is afflicted." Never for a moment does He forget them, nor overlook aught that affects their welfare and comfort. Their "names are engraven on the palms of their hands, and their walls are continually before Him." The ordinance of the Supper, exhibiting as it does, the kindness and condescension of Him who instituted it, is a pledge of the Saviour's sympathy; and an assurance, the most sustaining and consoling, that while personally absent from His people on earth, He in heaven thinks on them continually. He is ever acting on their behalf—performing all things most perfectly for their benefit.

This Memorial for Christ in the ordinance of the Supper must be erected *in faith*. We must embrace the offer and promise of the Gospel, and appropriate Christ, as the Bread of life sent from heaven. Faith supplies the presence and enjoyment of the crucified Saviour. We go forth to behold Him as the Prince of life; and we see Him in His beauty "with the crown wherewith His mother crowned Him, in the day of His espousals, and in the day of the gladness of His heart."* The gracious provision presented in the Supper is realized by faith alone; and whether the Saviour is contemplated in the mysteries of His death—His body broken and His blood shed—or in the glory of His exaltation and work in heaven, He and His benefits are enjoyed in believing. In this ordinance, faith is especially exercised and invigorated. We realize "the substance of things not seen." They come to have a present subsistence in the soul, and we receive "the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

Again, we should remember the Redeemer *most gratefully*. To His merits we owe every benefit we enjoy, as well as every

* Song iii. 11.

blessing we yet hope for. He has redeemed us from the curse—delivered us from the enemy's hand—and prevented us with His loving kindness and tender mercy. The lot of our inheritance has been chosen in covenant; a table has been covered for us in the presence of our foes—and our cup has been made to overflow. We have nothing of good that we have not received from Him, and that is not the fruit of His sovereign love and of His costly purchase. The language of our hearts, as we sit at His table and partake of the goodness of His holy place, should be, “What shall I render to the Lord, for all His benefits toward me?” The frame of our spirits should be grateful admiration and praise.

The remembrance of Christ at His table should be *humble*. We are called to the Great Supper, as “the poor, the halt, the lame, and the blind;” “the *simple*” are welcomed to wisdom’s feast. If we receive aright the representation of the Saviour’s finished work, we will see our own sins as the procuring cause of His embittered sufferings. His body was broken for us—His blood shed for the remission of our sins. We look upon Him whom we have pierced, and we mourn and are in bitterness for Him. The sense of His amazing goodness to us in redemption leads us to repentance. We can only eat the feast with the “bitter herbs” of godly sorrow for sin. Every act of true faith leads to repentance. The feeling that we have so often forgotten our Best Benefactor—broken solemn vows, and brought forth so little fruit, and the sense of our great and manifold provocations, will humble us to the dust, even when surrounded with displays of the richest mercy and grace. As we lay the offering of a contrite spirit upon the altar, like David as he sat in the presence of the Lord, we are constrained to exclaim—“Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto? And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?” (2 Sam. vii. 18, 19.)

We, furthermore, commemorate the death of Christ *lovingly*. The Saviour Himself is the Best and only Beloved of His people. In His undertaking and sacrifice for human redemption, His unspeakable love is brightly manifested. He “loved us and gave Himself for us.” He “loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood.” The sacramental supper is eminently the great feast of His love, in which the Saviour is exhibited in every endearing aspect and relation—to which

none but His friends are invited, and where He condescends to confer tokens of tenderest affection. He brings them to the Banqueting House, and displays His "Banner of love" around them. He tenders to them the sweetest invitations, and manifold tokens of the most fervent affection. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon ; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse."* At the feast, the only suitable frame of heart is to appropriate and cling to the Well-Beloved—and to yield the supreme love of the heart to Him. All kinds of tender affection should centre in Him, as the most deserved and loving—the love of esteem—of gratitude—of complacency and delight. "Whom having not seen, we love, and in whom, though now we see Him not, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."†

Finally—This remembrance of Christ should be *constant*. We raise a memorial to His name which is designed to be lasting. Our resolution at the sacramental Feast is to remember, and to make to be remembered, His name in all ages, that "the people may praise Him for ever and ever."‡ Our remembrance of His love at His table, and the fellowship we enjoy with Him, will leave impressions which cannot easily fade away. His faithfulness to His promise made known—the experience of the power of His love in the heart—and the familiar intercourse which He condescends to hold with His people, cannot fail to draw the heart to Him, and to constrain to a habitual loving remembrance of Him. This is a chief part of the benefit of special holy ordinances. The discoveries made to the heart of the Saviour's beauty and excellency are designed to be lasting, and not evanescent. Scenes of prayer answered, and blessings enjoyed—the places of covenant dedication and spiritual communion impress the mind, and were intended so to remain that they might occupy a chief place in the memory of the heart, and might influence the whole life and conduct. This practical remembrance is throughout all the life to its close, and even when the natural faculties fail, and memory, like the other mental powers, decays, the Spirit brings seasonably to remembrance Jesus and His precious words. In heaven, the redeemed, as they appear in the immediate presence of the Lamb, and recal scenes of hallowed intercourse

* Song iv. 8, 9.

† 1 Pet. 1, 8.

‡ Ps. xlv. 17.

with Him on earth, will cherish the perpetual vivid remembrance of His love in redemption, and will give full expression to their gratitude and joy, in heartfelt praise—"They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness."* So full and greatly important is this commemoration of the Redeemer in the ordinance of the Supper—so fraught with choice benefits is the act of remembering Him, while partaking of the emblems of His dying love, and in carrying out this remembrance in a life of devoted obedience!

* Ps. cxlv. 17.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LORD'S SUPPER AN EXHIBITION AND PROFESSION.

A PUBLIC solemn EXHIBITION or profession of the death of Christ made in the Lord's Supper is another important end of its observance. In the Apostle Paul's account of the institution, this is intimately connected with the commemoration of Christ (1 Cor. xi. 26)—“For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, *ye do show the Lord's death till He come.*” The original term is significant and expressive. It denotes to *proclaim or announce publicly*; and is applied to the declaration of *new things*,*—intimating in this connexion that the death of Christ while brought to remembrance should ever be new and vivid in the memory. This is the great matter of a full and right profession of Christianity. We believe that the same Lord who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, is now throned in glory, and ever lives to make intercession, and that He will come again to judge angels and men at His appearance and kingdom. We confess Him before men, when we openly and in the most solemn manner, avouch these fundamental truths, and when, moreover, we profess entire reliance for personal salvation on the death of Christ. “*With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession or profession is made unto salvation.*”† This profession is to be made, first of all, *to God*, as indicating our whole ground of pardon and acceptance, and then *before men* as declaring that here is the only way of life and salvation. In a strict and proper sense, this showing forth is in its very nature *open and public*. The original term is applied to what is openly proclaimed and generally made known, as when the faith of the Christians at Rome is said to be “spoken of throughout the whole world.”‡ There is clearly no scriptural warrant for dispensing the sacrament of the Supper in private, as is done in some sections of the Protestant Church. This practice not only sets aside Christian fellowship, and deprives the church of one of the seals of the covenant, and of a most valuable means of spiritual instruction; but it is opposed to a principal

* Ex. xiii. 8.

† Rom. x. 10.

‡ Rom. i. 8.

end of the institution--the showing forth of the death of Christ till He come.

The exhibition of the death of Christ by means of the Supper is *a principal and eminent means of teaching the grand fundamental doctrine of the Atonement*. It holds out the death of Christ as the only hope and blessing of the world. As a monument erected at the time that the ordinance was first introduced, it proclaims the fact that Christ died to save sinners. The elements, the words, and actions used in the sacrament proclaim, in reiterated terms, and in the most impressive manner, that His death was substitutionary and propitiatory—and that through it alone, there is salvation to the lost and perishing. While there are other ways of making known to the world this great fundamental truth, such as the written word, the preaching of the Gospel, and the faith and hope of Christians expressed in life and death, it may be safely affirmed, that without the institution of the Lord's Supper, these would be in a measure ineffectual. While no institution of our holy religion has been more perverted and corrupted than this, yet it is matter of devout thanksgiving, that it is still observed according to inspired prescription, and that throughout various parts of the church, and in many lands, it is dispensed in as much simplicity and purity, as it was in Apostolic times, when Paul reproved and rectified the abuses of the Corinthian church, and dictated, as an inspired teacher, the nature and form of the ordinance, by the authority of the church's Head. The Lord's Supper is a monument erected by the hands of believers in Christ and devout worshippers, to be seen yet in all nations and among all people on earth—inscribed with the love and grace of a crucified Saviour—declaring the hopes of the redeemed—and lifting up a beacon-light to the lost and perishing. In the most impressive manner, it proclaims that “without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.” It invites and welcomes the sinner to the covert of the atonement. It exhibits the character and privileges of the friends of Christ—and is the badge of their separation from the world lying in wickedness. And, with singular simplicity and impressiveness, it shows “the tabernacle of God with men,” and His dwelling with them on earth, and believers sitting in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. If the observance of the ordinance in its purity were to cease, or its neglect become general, then the knowledge of the atone-

ment—the grand central doctrine of Christianity—would likewise disappear; and all the important truths and precious hopes dependent on it would be obscured and subverted. On the other hand, by devout and frequent attendance on the Lord's Supper, we not only declare publicly our faith in the death of Christ, and our dependence on it for all blessing—but we likewise take part in making known His saving health throughout the nations. We thus seek to bring men of every kindred and people and tongue to glory only in the Cross of Christ, and to submit to the sovereign dominion of Him who is the blessed and only Potentate—King of kings and Lord of lords.

Not only was the announcement of Christ's death by the Supper to be public—it was also clearly designed to be *perpetual*. Those for whom it was instituted were enjoined to show forth by it the death of Christ till He should “come again.” This plainly refers to the consummation of all things and the Saviour's coming to judgment—for in this sense, the phrase is constantly employed throughout the New Testament. It is manifestly absurd to regard, with Romanists, its meaning as being—“Ye show forth Christ's death corporeally until He come corporeally.” The Supper is not presented as *a sacrifice*, but as *the memorial of a sacrifice*. This end of the institution is, in like manner, obviously inconsistent with the sentiment of the *Quakers* or *Friends*, which maintains that the ordinances of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper were only temporary in their nature—designed for the Apostolic age—and even then but partially observed. According to them, the washing in baptism is only the internal baptism of the Spirit, and the Lord's Supper is properly celebrated, when, without any material elements, there is the spiritual remembrance of the death of Christ.* The express objects of these institutions—apos-

* Mr Joseph B. Gurney, one of the most evangelical and cautious writers of the Society of Friends—while maintaining the views of his party respecting the sacraments, appears to be sadly at a loss to render this doctrine accordant with the Saviour's words—“*This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*” He says—“it appears by no means very improbable that it was to the cup of the Passover exclusively that our Saviour's injunction applied;” and according to him, it means—“as often as ye meet together to celebrate the Supper of the Passover, and to drink of that cup, which represents the New Testament in my blood, take care that ye forget not the true purport of the ceremony—‘Do it in remembrance of me.’” This respectable writer here presents a striking instance of perverted judgment, when employed in maintaining an erroneous system. The P'assover

tolic injunctions—and the invariable practice of the early Christian churches, approved by divinely inspired men, show plainly that these sacraments were intended to be perpetual in the church. The special injunction respecting the Supper implies, that, notwithstanding errors and apostacies in the church, and revolutions in the world, the observance of this sacred ordinance will continue till the end of time, and till the Redeemer will come to judgment. There will be means found for thus professing Christ before men, and for commemorating His dying love. The Gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout all nations. All men will be drawn to the Saviour lifted up. Saved ones will be added to the church ; and the church, by an open sealed profession, will avouch the Lord, and become incorporated as one body ; and as a sacramental host, dedicated to the Captain of salvation, and engaged in the conflicts of faith against all enemies. Throughout the happy Millennium—the period of the church's triumph and glory—vast congregations, assembled every where throughout all lands, will joyfully celebrate the feast of the Lord's love, and will, in the promised abundant effusion of the Spirit, enjoy His gracious presence. “The name of the city shall be *Jehovah Shammeh* —the Lord is there.”* In a sense much fuller and more joy-inspiring than was ever heretofore realized—“The Lord of hosts will make unto all people on Mount Zion, a feast of fat things—of fat things full of marrow, and of wines on the lees well-refined. And He shall destroy on this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces ; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth ;—for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”† At that “EVENING TIME” of bright and attractive light, congregations, met in the Banqueting House, under a “Banner of love” displayed,

was abolished by the death of Christ ; and the church of Corinth to which the Apostle wrote could not possibly require directions concerning the use of the Passover cup. It is certainly “very improbable,” that the Saviour's injunction, in instituting the Lord's Supper, was designed to refer to the Paschal Feast, which was then altogether to cease ; and in the practice of the New Testament churches, it is in the highest degree improbable that there should a reference to the shadows of the former economy which had passed away, and to an ordinance which had lost all signification—now that the type had merged into its glorious substance.

* Ezek. xlviii. 35.

† Isa. xxv. 6-8.

and enjoying sweet communion with God and fellow saints, will, as they rise up from the Table, see the “Son of Man”—their Lord for whom they waited, coming “in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.” And as sacraments on earth come to an end, they shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and perfectly assimilated to Him, in soul and body; at His glorious appearance, they shall be presented to Him as the Bride fully prepared for “the everlasting espousals”—a “glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

Besides this common exhibition of the Saviour’s death in the profession of the universal church, the Lord’s Supper is designed to be a *special showing forth* of the sufferings and death of Christ, at the time, by each believing communicant; and this, when rightly understood, constitutes an eminent part of the service. This may be regarded in various aspects:—

1. Believers, in the exercise of faith, show forth the *Saviour's death to God*, as the *ground of their pardon and acceptance*. By the sacrifice of Himself, the Redeemer for ever put away sin. Through its continual presentation, the Father is reconciled, and reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing to men their trespasses. By faith we rest on the finished atonement; and under the sense of guilt, and afraid of Divine displeasure and rejection, we make it all our plea for acceptance with God. We present to Him that with which He cannot but be well-pleased for His righteousness’ sake. Sheltered under the covert of the blood of atonement, the destroying angel passes by, and we are delivered from death. Though coming to God, defiled and unworthy, we have boldness to enter into the Holiest of all by the blood of Jesus. The sacrifice of Christ presented to God by faith ever comes before Him as “a sweet-smelling savour.” He “beholds not iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel.” Through the blood of the covenant, believers are welcomed to the presence of the King—and their “offerings and burnt-offerings are accepted on His altar.” We hold up Christ’s death to God, too, as the prevailing plea and argument with God in prayer.

2. It is displayed to the world and to devils, *as the ground of our separation from them, and triumph over them*. Our profession as Christians is that we are redeemed from the world, and are a holy, peculiar people. The sacramental observance is the public badge that we have come out and are separate. The death which we commemorate exhibits the envenomed

enmity of devils and men against Christ and His people, and their hostility to all the purposes which He came to accomplish by His obedience unto the death. In the sacramental service, we declare, in the most explicit terms, that we are not of the world ; and that we glory alone in the cross of Christ, by which “we are crucified to the world, and the world to us.”* By this we conquer. Christ Jesus “was manifested” in His life on earth, and in His death, “that He might destroy the works of the devil.”† He bids His people “Be of good cheer”—as He has “overcome the world” for them—and He is ever ready to confer upon them the fruits of His victory.‡ On the cross, He “spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly.” In His completed undertaking, we “always triumph in Christ;” and coming to the sacred pledges of His love, we rejoice that we are not numbered with the world, and that, by union to Christ, and the working of a living faith in Him, we are even now conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.”

3. We show forth the death of Christ *to saints and holy angels, as the basis of union and fellowship with them.* As a chosen ransomed people, we are one with believers on earth and with glorified saints and holy angels in heaven. We belong to the “one family, which in heaven and earth is named after Christ.” The service in which we engage in the observance of the Supper markedly indicates this union, and exemplifies this fellowship. “We are one body and one bread, as we are all partakers of this one bread.”§ Appearing on Mount Zion, we come “to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.” In the person of Christ as our living Head, we are united to all the redeemed in earth and heaven ; and under His rule as Mediator, we are associated with saints in all places, and with holy angels—those ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. In showing forth Christ’s death, we become conscious of this spirit of union, and are made to rejoice in its blessed fruits and privileges. Our fellowship with saints and holy angels is refreshing and ennobling. As we realize it at the communion table, we anticipate its perfect state in heaven, where we shall be in the closest and most endeared union with the redeemed gathered from all nations, and the felicity resulting from communion with holy angels and saints made perfect will be enjoyed for evermore.

* Gal. vi. 14.

† 1 John iii. 8.

‡ John xvi. 33.

§ 1 Cor. x. 17.

Finally, in the Supper, we show forth the Saviour's death *to our own consciences*. While the blood of Christ speaks in God's ear, claiming pardon for the guilty, and acceptance for the defiled and unworthy, it speaks to the sinner's conscience, as the only voice that can effectually cause peace. The perfect satisfaction of Christ, the Surety, appropriated by faith, is fitted to banish fear and to give "joy and peace in believing." Challenges of guilt—misgivings from broken vows, and unfruitfulness, are successfully met and silenced, by exhibiting the death of Christ as a full and accepted ransom, and as the Divine provision for cleansing from sin. The blood of Christ can "purge the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God."* The sacrifice of atonement appropriated becomes to us, like the ancient peace-offerings, a sacrifice of friendship with God—the grand medium and seal of brotherhood with fellow-saints, and of internal joy and happiness to ourselves. When the risen Saviour comes in to His own ordinance, and speaks "peace," showing to His people the tokens of His great love, in the marks of His sufferings, He still imparts the peace which He declares, and they are made to rejoice serving the Lord.

Thus, whether considered in the way of making a public profession, and giving an impressive testimony to the grand doctrine of the atonement, or as a means of fellowship and blessing to believers, the showing forth of the death of Christ is an important and eminent end of the observance of the sacramental Supper. It exhibits the way of reconciliation to God and acceptance; it proclaims by believers their holy separation from the world lying in wickedness, and their victory over all enemies; it declares the blessed unity of saints, and their fellowship with holy angels; and by pacifying and purifying the conscience, it elevates the heart in the ways of the Lord, and restores to it the joys of salvation. How blessed are these privileges of the sacramental feast! How encouraging to the Christian that they are to be enjoyed in increasing measure on till the time of Christ's second coming, when those assembling to show forth His death, will go out to meet Him, as He comes to receive to His glory those who on earth fed upon His flesh and drank of His blood, while they looked for His glorious appearance!

* Hebrews ix. 14.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LORD'S SUPPER, A SIGN AND SEAL OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

THAT the sacraments are real means of grace, “appointed by Christ for conveying the benefits of redemption to His people,” is the doctrine that has all along been held by the Reformed Churches. In endeavouring to establish this doctrine, they have generally maintained that the sacraments are *seals*, for confirming and ratifying the promises of the covenant, and assuring to those who by faith receive them, the privileges promised. Several parties, who differ widely on other subjects, deny that the sacraments are properly means of grace. *Socinians*, for instance, teach that the sacraments are public marks and notes of a Christian profession; but they deny that with any propriety, they can be termed seals of the grace of God, in the remission of sin and in regeneration.* *Romanists* deny, on other grounds, that sacraments have a sealing power, or are seals of Divine promises. *Zwingle*, the eminent Swiss Reformer, in his early writings,† taught that the sacraments are simply “Badges of Christian men’s professions;” “in the sight of the church and of the world; they thereby profess themselves to be Christians.” They are intended to be “significant emblems of the great truths of the Gospel, and perpetual memorials of the great work of human redemption.” He argues in the *Treatise on True and False Religion*—“It is impossible that anything external can confirm and establish a man’s internal faith.” And again, in his *Exposition of Christian Faith*, he says—“Sacraments as other memorials, can only produce historical, but not religious faith.” In maintaining such sentiments, Zwingle had chiefly in view the refutation of the Romish doctrine of the inherent power of the sacraments, rather than the propounding of anything concerning their real efficacy. He has been generally represented as denying that the sacraments are, in any proper sense, means of grace. They may by association suggest truth, and awaken devotional feeling; but are not to be regarded as channels di-

* Racov. Cat. civ.—De Baptismo.

† Statements in A.D. 1525.

vinely appointed for communicating gracious privileges and blessings. There is satisfactory evidence, that, at a later period of the Swiss Reformer's history—particularly after the *Marburg Conference* on the Sacramentarian Controversy, he came to have clearer and more scriptural views on the subject. He signed the “*Consensus*,” or agreement of the Swiss churches, in which the sacraments are spoken of, in the same way as Calvin more fully taught—as being not merely *badges* of a Christian profession, and commemorative signs, but as *means of grace and salvation*. He viewed the Lord's Supper in the light of the teaching of the New Testament, both on the human and Divine side. On the former, it is a “commemoration,” and a “pledge”—on the latter it is a “sign and seal.” The instrumentality on man's part, by which he receives the blessing represented is *faith*—the agency on the part of God, by which the blessing is conveyed and applied is the *Holy Spirit*. Thus “Zwingle, profiting by the close study of the New Testament, purged the sacrament of the Supper from every vestige of mysticism and materialism, and exhibited it in its scriptural simplicity and spiritual efficacy.”*

Several distinguished *Congregational writers* have, in recent days, maintained that the sacraments are only to be regarded as commemorative ordinances, and that they are, in no proper sense, to be viewed as means for imparting grace, much less as seals for confirming or ratifying the covenant. *Dr Halley*, in his Congregational Lecture, says—“The sacraments are significant rites—emblems of Divine truth—sacred signs of evangelical doctrine, designed to illustrate, enforce, and to commemorate the great and most important truths of the Gospel.”† He argues that the sacraments of the New Testament cannot be personal seals—1. Because the ceremonial institutions of the Old Testament were only “sacred signs of Divine truth;” and 2. “That to consider the sacraments as means of grace, or the personal seals of spiritual and saving grace, would be “opposed to the great Protestant doctrine of justification by faith without works.”‡ If they are seals of the covenant, they would be seals of spiritual blessings to those who do not spiritually receive them. This, according to Dr Halley, would

* This is clearly shown by *Christoffel* in his “Life of Ulric Zwingle,” and by Dr Wylie, in his admirable “History of Protestantism,” now in course of publication, vol. ii. p. 54, 55.

† *Halley on the Sacraments*, p. 95.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 101.

make the worthy reception—the good work of the man—the seal and assurance of eternal life—“so that instead of looking entirely and exclusively to Christ Jesus—to His spotless obedience and atoning sacrifice, he is looking upon himself amidst the deceitfulness of his own heart for seals and verifications of his own justification.”* When we have stated more fully the doctrine of the Reformed churches on this subject, it will be seen that Dr Halley, in whose views there is reason to think that large numbers of Congregationalists at present concur, misrepresents their doctrine, and that there is no proper ground for holding, that in maintaining the sacraments to be seals of the grace of the covenant, we are opposed to the grand fundamental doctrine of justification by faith.

There are others, who, from defective views of the covenant of grace, and its administration, have no proper idea of the sealing nature of the sacraments—only regarding the observance of them as necessary for maintaining a Christian profession, and being ignorant in a great measure of the *spiritual meaning* connected with it. In order that we may see this matter clearly, we advert to

1. First. The doctrine of the Reformed churches on this subject;
2. Consider the nature and design of a seal; and 3. Show, in what respects the Lord's Supper is a seal of the covenant of grace.

In our Westminster Standards it is declared †—“Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits, and to confirm our interest in Him; as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world, and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His word.” To guard against grievous errors on the subject of the grace communicated through the sacraments, it is added (sect. iii.) “The grace which is exhibited in and by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.” These statements plainly teach that the sacraments are means of grace, for exhibiting and applying

* Halley on the Sacraments, p. 105.

† Westminster Confession, c. xxvii. sect. 1.

the benefits of redemption. These benefits are held out in Divine promises of blessings made to those who rightly partake of the sacraments, which are the appointed signs and seals of the blessings. The sacraments have “*no virtue*,” power or efficacy in themselves; and neither the office, nor character, nor intention of the person who administers them, is the ground of the sacramental blessing. The grace which they impart is wholly owing to the blessing of Christ, and the agency of the Holy Spirit, and is exclusively enjoyed by believers. Thus the *Shorter Catechism* declares—“The sacraments are holy ordinances instituted by Christ, wherein by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers.”* And in the *Larger Catechism*—“A sacrament is a holy ordinance, instituted by Christ in His church to signify, seal and exhibit † unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of His mediation.”‡ Such is the uniform doctrine of all the Reformed churches, with some slight differences in the mode of statement. The *Geneva Catechism* thus succinctly answers questions proposed on this subject—“What is a sacrament?” Ans. “An external testimony of the Divine benevolence toward us, which symbols represent spiritual graces by a visible sign, for the purpose of sealing Divine promises to our hearts, by which their truth may be the better confirmed.” Again, “The power and efficacy of the sacrament is not included in the external element, but flows wholly from the Spirit of God. Thus God is pleased to put forth His power through His own organs, for effecting the end which He hath ordained.” The great Protestant doctrine in relation to the sacraments is that they are symbolical and exhibitive ordinances, and signs and seals of the covenant of grace. Not only do they signify and represent Christ and His benefits—they also seal and apply them to believers. This they do only to *faith*, as it receives and rests upon the word of God, without which faith, the sacraments exert no gracious influence, and confer no blessing. In themselves and apart

* Question 92.

† The word “exhibit” used in this Question, properly means to confer or impart—as the Latin, from which the English word is taken, frequently means. In the *Westminster Confession* (ch. xxviii., sec. 6), the term is interchanged with confer. “The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments is not conferred by any virtue in them.”

‡ Question 162.

from the word of truth, the sacraments have no supernatural power to save or sanctify. All their efficacy depends on the agency of the Holy Spirit. They are to be regarded as channels of the Spirit's gracious influence only to them, who by faith receive them.*

It will be clearly seen, from these statements, that there is no ground for the objection offered by Dr Halley against the sacraments being seals—that this is opposed to justification by faith, and that it lays stress upon our works for acceptance with God. The whole blessing in the sacrament is by the agency of the Spirit, and through the faith which He works in the heart. Sacraments, like the Word, are ordained means by which the grace of Christ is imparted to the soul. They are simply appendages to the Word—“divinely ordained, that by them, the promise received by faith may be presented with greater clearness and force of application, and that we may through them draw nigh to God, with holy boldness, and in the full assurance of faith.”†

2. Among men, a seal is used for *SEPARATING* and *disinguishing*, and, again for *ratifying* and *confirming*. It is employed for important purposes in human affairs,—in commerce—in political treaties—in conferring social honours and dignities—for securing privileges—and to ratify testamentary deeds. Seals are universally recognized as of value to confirm solemn agreements; to exhibit them as true and authentic; and to induce strong confidence in their faithful fulfilment. By such signs, the stipulations of covenants, which were first made by mutual consent and expressed in words are firmly established. The seal attached to the last will and testament, with the sign manual, assures the legatees that they have the unquestioned right to the property disposed by the testator. The royal seal appended to a patent of privilege or nobility, con-

* The sacrament may be viewed “*as a pledge to assure us of the grace given to us.*” “A seal is an instrument of confirmation—a solemn attestation to a promise or covenant—a signature to a deed of conveyance, confirming the privilege to all that are interested in it. Thus, as Bishop Jewell admirably expounds the subject, “Christ hath ordained sacraments, that by them He might set before our eyes the mysteries of our salvation; and might more strongly confirm the faith which we have in His blood, and might seal His grace in our hearts.”—*Sacramental Instruction*, by Rev. C. Bridge, p. 11-15.

† “What else are sacraments but seals of the word?”—*Calvin*, on Ephesians v. 26.

firms its possession to those in whose name it is granted, to the exclusion of all others, and by all the honour and authority of the sovereign. *Augustine* calls the sacrament “*a visible word*”—as it were representing the promises of God portrayed on a picture, and setting them before us in a vivid and life-like image. Because of our dulness, and carnal apprehension of Divine things, these ordinances are provided—adapted to the weakness of our faith, and fitted to minister to us the strongest spiritual nourishment and comfort. The Apostle represents God “by two immutable things in which it was impossible for Him to lie,” giving strong consolation “to those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them.”* These are the word and the oath of God in the covenant—the “*two title deeds*” of life and eternal salvation. Either of these is sufficient to assure us of all spiritual and heavenly blessings, as far as God is concerned. But because of the weakness of our faith, we require both, to render the matter certain to us, without fear and doubting. So in the sacraments, faith exercised on the word of promise, embraces Christ and His benefits. The sacramental sign and seal, added to the word, is the assurance of God’s love and faithfulness—fitted to confirm to the soul the grace of the covenant, and to confer everlasting consolation. It is in this sense that *Augustine* in one place declares that “The effectualness of the Word is showed forth in the sacrament, not because it is spoken, but because it is believed.” The Word and the Spirit both testify of the grace of God, and according to their way of operation, seal it. The sacraments do the same, though in a subordinate and different manner. The word is a verbal testimony—the sacrament a symbolical. In the former, the testimony is given by the word heard—in the latter, through the sight and other senses. The Spirit is an internal seal which marks from its own nature; the sacraments are external seals, which confirm and ratify only from their institution. The Holy Spirit, seals as a principal and efficacious Cause—which uses the word and sacraments as instruments.

The Apostle Paul, speaking of Abraham’s call, and the imputation of righteousness to him, says, “He received the sign of circumcision—a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had—yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that

* Heb. vi. 18.

righteousness might be imputed to them also." * This declares comprehensively the nature and design of the Old Testament initiatory sacrament, and is as applicable to the sacramental ordinances of the New as to those of the ancient economy. In the historical record of the institution of the rite of circumcision, "God calls it "a token of the covenant" between Him and Abraham and his seed." † It was more than a token or sign—a mark of indication ;—it was also a pledge or seal or confirmation of the righteousness of faith. By this is not meant that it was in any sense the means of generating faith or the efficient cause of it, nor that it is a seal of faith itself. ‡ It has a sealing power of the covenant, and of the promise of grace through the righteousness of faith, that includes the blessings by which all the nations of the earth are to be blessed in the promised Seed. As a seal, it was to Abraham the assurance of the righteousness which had been imputed to him before his circumcision, even when he believed God, and "it was counted to him for righteousness." What was essential to one sacrament in the early dispensation of grace, belongs to other like ordinances under every change of economy. Abraham is said in Scripture to be "the father of the faithful"—an example and model to believers in all future ages. "They which are of faith, are the saved, the children of faithful Abraham." What was fulfilled to him in the way of holy privilege is likewise fulfilled to us—the seed of the covenant. The righteousness of faith, and the promises of grace of which the sacrament is the seal, are common to all believers, and are not for Abraham alone. § It need not be objected, as has sometimes been done, that circumcision could not be a seal, confirming the covenant of grace, as it was under a penalty to be observed by *all* the literal descendants of Abraham, though some of them had no part in the covenant, and did not inherit its blessings. The apostle in this passage himself makes the clear and marked distinction. Circumcision was a sign to all—but a seal to Abraham alone, as the father of the faithful.

* Rom. iv. 11.

† Gen. xvii. 11.

‡ "The sacraments of the church were never intended, and are not adapted to *confer* grace, or the blessings of salvation, upon men. Their proper use is to set a Divine *seal* upon a state *already existing*, and so they *presuppose* and do not *create* it. As circumcision merely sealed Abraham's already existing acceptance with God, so is it with the sacraments of the New Testament."—*Critical and Experimental Commentary*, vol. vi., on Romans iv. 11.

§ Gal. iii. 9, 16.

To him and his spiritual seed, it was such a sign that it might be a seal to distinguish it from other signs, by ratifying promised blessings. A sacrament, as a public sign, sets forth some important truth—as a seal, it confirms an engagement on the part of God. In the judicious statements of *Dr Chalmers*—“A sign becomes a seal, when it is the mark of any deed or any declaration having actually come forth from Him, who professes to be the Author of it. It authenticates it to be his, so that should it be a promise, it binds him to perform; or should it be an order, it carries along with it, all the force of his authority; or should it be an engagement of any sort, it fastens upon him the obligation of discharging it. It may sometimes happen that a seal marks the concurrence of two parties in the matter to which it is affixed; and the sign of circumcision was just such a seal. It was enjoined by God; it was consented to by Abraham. God sealed by it the promise which he had formerly made of a righteousness to Abraham who believed; and Abraham expressed by it that he was a believer. It did not change the footing upon which Abraham obtained the favour that was due to righteousness; it only gave the form and the solemnity of a symbolical expression to that which was already in full reality and effect, though it had only yet been the subject of a verbal expression.”* Neither circumcision nor any other sacrament is righteousness, or the cause of righteousness, nor is it a substitute for faith, nor a seal of faith—but a seal of the righteousness received and appropriated by faith. The Apostle, in Galatians v. 6, sets aside the idea that a sacrament of itself avails to secure salvation, and applies the matter to Gentiles under the Gospel, equally as to the Jewish people—the literal descendants of Abraham—“In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love.” On this statement, *Calvin* justly remarks—“Mark how the circumcision of Abraham confirms our faith, with regard to gratuitous righteousness; for it was the sealing of the righteousness of faith, that righteousness might be imputed to us also.” It is plainly taught by the Apostle that circumcision was not only confirmatory of imputed righteousness to ancient believers, but through him also to the Gentiles believing on Christ. As Abraham’s faith making him the father of Gentile believers, had the righteousness of the covenant assured to him, so believers

* *Chalmers’s Lectures on Epistle to the Romans*, vol. i. p. 137.

under the Gospel—the children of Abraham by faith have in the believing reception of the sacraments, confirmed and ratified to them the exceeding great and precious promises of life and salvation.

The sacraments have the same relation to the promises of grace and salvation, as other signs and seals added to a promise confirm it, and render it the more certain. The Bow appearing in the cloud in the day of rain, was designed not only to aid the memory in relation to the flood past, but to confirm faith that there would be no future deluge to overwhelm the earth.* The fleece of Gideon gave the assurance of the deliverance of Israel from the power of Midian; as the live-coal taken from the altar, and applied to the Prophet's lips assured him of the purging away of his iniquity, and was a confirmation of grace for the exercise of his office. The sacraments, like those other symbols are not only significant and expressive, but are designed to be confirmatory and sealing to the promises of the Gospel. It is on the principle that the relation is so close between the seal and the thing sealed, that the names, properties and effects of the one are frequently given to the other. Thus Circumcision is called the Covenant.† The Lamb sacrificed is termed the Passover.‡ To the Manna is given the name of "spiritual meat and drink."§ Baptism is designated "the washing of regeneration," and "the remission of sins."|| And the Bread in the Lord's Supper is called "the body of Christ."¶ The figurative language thus used implies the nearest designed connection between the natural elements and the spiritual things which they symbolically represent. It evidences that they were ordained to ratify and make sure the blessings provided for them who worthily partake of them. These ordinances are signs of the covenant of peace for confirmation and ratification of the promises, as well on God's part as on that of man. The covenant is of the nature of an oath, by which God binds Himself to the fulfilment of all His promises. An oath is confirmatory or sealing—terminating strife—effecting peace—and imparting strong consolation, by assuring of the enjoyment of all its gracious provisions.

Applying these general principles to the sacrament of the Supper, we regard it as

i. A *Visible seal on God's part to all who receive it.*

* Gen. ix. 12. † Gen. xvii. 11. ‡ Ex. xii. 27. § 1 Cor. x. 4.
|| Tit. iii. 5; Acts xxii. 16. ¶ Matt. xxvi. 26; 1 Cor. x. 16.

Admitting as we do, that the ground of admission to this ordinance is not regeneration, but a credible profession of religion, then some who partake of it are not genuine believers, and the sacrament does not confirm to them the promises of grace. It only serves to such that office of the seal which *separates* and *distinguishes* from others. In displaying at the time this badge of a Christian profession, they are outwardly set apart to bear witness to the great truths of the scheme of redemption, and to enjoy the full external privileges of the visible church. As part of the sacramental host, they are seen enrolled for God's service. They are thus impressively reminded of the Lord's paramount claims upon them, and are called to be a holy nation, and a peculiar people. Privileges of the most valuable kind are brought near to them; and on God's part, they are given gracious offers, and have the warrant and welcome to embrace them. Access to the ordinance does not of itself authenticate their profession of faith, or assure them of the possession of New Covenant blessings. But it is designed to impress upon them the most solemn sense of their responsibility, and to show their fearful condition if they are yet unregenerate. In the case of true believers, the sacrament of the Supper is a precious seal on God's part, ratifying to them the promises of the covenant of redemption, and assuring them of the possession of its highest privileges and blessings. When we believe on Christ, and accept of Him as presented in the promise, by faith, we set to our seal that God is true. The holy Spirit given to believers, by a special influence brings Divine promises with power to the heart, and assures them of the full enjoyment of the things promised. "In whom also after ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."* The Spirit is the great *internal seal* to the believer's faith, maintaining, increasing it, clearing up its evidences, and assuring by its witness of the full and perfect enjoyment of its blessed objects. The sacrament is not only a gracious appendage to the word of promise, but is also a designed external seal, to confirm to the believer truths the most important, and the personal possession of the rich blessings included in the saints' inheritance.

2. It is the visible seal of *solemn engagements on God's part* and *on ours*. All the spiritual provision, presented by expressive symbols in the ordinance, was made in the covenant of

* Eph. i. 13.

grace between the Father and the Son from all eternity. When we are invited to partake of it, it is promised—"I will make with thee an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David."* Coming to Mount Zion, we come "to the Mediator of the New Covenant;"† and "the blood of sprinkling"—symbolized in the ordinance, is exhibited as "the blood of the New Covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins."‡ The food of faith which we spiritually enjoy in the ordinance is the blessed and soul-satisfying meat that God gives in the sacrament to them that fear Him, as He is "ever mindful of His covenant."§ As this is brought near, we are solemnly reminded of the stipulations of the great Compact of mercy—the Father in His love giving elect sinners to Christ to be redeemed—laying their help upon "One that was Mighty"—engaging to sustain Him in His undertaking—to accept of His obedience and sacrifice in room of the guilty—and to confer eternal life on Him, rewarding Him with honour and universal dominion, and to bestow all the heavenly blessings upon His spiritual seed. The Mediator and Surety engaged on the part of the Elect, to assume their nature—offer a sinless and perfect obedience to the law as a broken covenant in their stead; and to pay to Divine justice the full ransom for their guilt—subdue their enemies—and redeem them to God by His blood. The sacrament, by significant and affecting symbols, brings into view all parts of this blessed arrangement. We have in it a vivid display of the great love of the Eternal Father, of the Person and finished work of the Surety, and of the unspeakable benefits that, in consequence of the covenant being sealed and ratified, belong to the redeemed of the Lord. The dispensation of these benefits by the exalted Redeemer, as He prepares the feast and presides at His own table, discovers, as with a visible seal, the royal charter of salvation, inscribed with precious promises and displaying the condescending grace of our covenant God. The wondrous provision is seen to be "ordered in all things and sure." As he takes hold of the covenant, the believer joyfully exclaims—"This is all my salvation and all my desire."|| "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." "I have said mercy shall be built up for ever; thy faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens. I

* Is. lv. 3. † Heb. xii. 24. ‡ Matt. xxvi. 28. § Ps. cxi. 5.
 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

have made a covenant with my chosen. I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed I will establish for ever, and build up Thy throne to all generations." * In this covenant, Christ and the seed are one. All the stipulations of the Surety are on their behalf, and the blessings provided are theirs by the strongest and most perfect right.

3. The sacrament is to the believer the *external gracious seal of the best blessings*. By presenting the great things of salvation in visible and significant signs to the senses, it assures believers, in the most convincing and affecting manner, of their right to inherit them fully. The love of God is "commended"—set off to the utmost—in the wonderful provision of the covenant; and while the worthy communicant partakes of the "Banquet of wine," the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost; and he hears spoken to his heart, the gracious assurance—"I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." † Christ is offered in the excellency of His person and offices, and in the mystery of His sufferings and death; and as he embraces Him, He can declare—"This is my beloved and my Friend." "A bundle of myrrh is my well-Beloved unto me: He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts." ‡ The sacrament, by significant words and actions, seals to believing recipients, pardon, peace, and the present joy of God's salvation. While the Spirit shines on His own work on the heart, and excites into lively exercise graces implanted—in the sacrament, there is often given a near and bright discovery of the glory to be revealed, and of our personal interest in it. What was apprehended by faith in believing the word, becomes, as it were, matter of realized experience to the senses. "In the mount the Lord is seen." We obtain earnests and fore-tastes of the inheritance of the saints in light. Words spoken to the ear become as "the still small voice"—evidencing the presence and power of Jehovah to the heart; so that, for the time, we feel that we cannot doubt that Christ and all His benefits are ours. This voice we hear, when we "are with Him in the Holy Mount." § "The Lord God is a Sun and Shield. He will give grace and glory, and withhold no good from them that walk uprightly." || Such assurances, often granted in connexion with the right participation of the sacra-

* Ps. xxvi. 14; lxxxix. 2-4.
§ 2 Pet. i. 18.

† Jer. xxxi. 3.
|| Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

‡ Song i. 13.

mental feast—above any that are given in the hearing of the word, are of unspeakable benefit to the young, and to weak and doubting Christians.. They furnish experimental evidence of the power and sweetness of true religion—animate and encourage them in the labours and trials of the Divine life ; and scattering the clouds that at times settle down on the mind, and renewing spiritual strength, believers go on their way rejoicing. Waiting on the Lord, “they mount up with wings as eagles, they run and are not weary—they walk and are not faint.”*

Lastly—This view of the sacrament as a seal of the covenant suggests *the most important practical thoughts.* It behoves all who engage in the service to come to it, as a sign ratifying an engagement most solemn. In human affairs, we take pains to see the seal, with the signature of a rightful authority attached to deeds in which we have a personal interest,—giving them validity, and securing the possession of property or honour. We do not attach our signature and seal to a blank, or to a document in which our name is not mentioned. Believers should then most carefully examine themselves whether they have a personal interest in the covenant of redemption, and whether they have embraced the promise. If assurances of life and salvation are graciously made to them, while they sit with delight under the shade of the “Apple-tree,” and find “its fruit sweet to their taste.” they should ever after live, as members of the “Sealed Company.” They should feed upon sealed promises, and should cherish habitual reliance upon the faithfulness of Him who has spoken them, and accompanied them with so many pledges of His gracious intention to confer all the good promised. As the patriarchs

* Isa. xl. 31. The Belgic Confession (A.D. 1561) thus describes the nature and objects of the Sacraments, putting prominently forward their character as seals—“We believe that our gracious God, on account of our weakness and infirmities, hath ordained the sacraments for us, thereby to seal unto us His promises, and to be pledges of the good will and grace of God towards us, and also to nourish and strengthen our faith, which He hath joined to the word of the Gospel, the better to present to our senses, both that which He signifies to us by His word, and that which He works inwardly in our hearts, thereby assuring and confirming in us the salvation which He imparts to us. For they are visible signs and seals of an inward and invisible thing, by means whereof God worketh in us by the power of the Holy Ghost. Therefore the signs are not in vain, or insignificant, so as to deceive us. For Jesus Christ is the true object presented by them, and without whom they would be of no moment.”

of old were persuaded of, and embraced promises, though the things promised were seen only afar off, and confessed themselves "strangers and pilgrims on earth," and "sought a better even a heavenly country," so ought we—resting on the promise ratified in the sacrament, seek earnestly those things that are above; and rely with heartfelt confidence in Divine power for the full enjoyment. "I have spoken, I will also bring it to pass—I have purposed it, I will also do it"*(Isa. xlvi. 11).

* *Calvin*, in his Commentary (on Eph. v. 26)—asks in brief but expressive terms—"What else are sacraments but seals of the Word?" In a late number of an excellent theological periodical (the *Southern Presbyterian Review*—American) when speaking of the Abrahamic covenant, the character of the sacrament as a seal is well stated—"A seal is ordained not in the heavens above, like the bow in the cloud in the covenant with Noah, nor in nature around, like the tree of life in the covenant with Adam, but in his own body and in the bodies of his seed;—a *sacramental* seal, and not an arbitrary or conventional sign, and therefore a seal which might subserve and was designed to subserve the double purpose of confirming the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promise, and of confirming the faithfulness of Abraham and his seed in fulfilling their vows to be the Lord's. *He* promised to be their God, and *they* vowed to be His people,"

For further views of the Lord's Supper considered as a seal of the covenant, see Appendix.

CHAPTER X.

THE LORD'S SUPPER AN ORDINANCE OF FELLOWSHIP.

EVERY scriptural view of the Lord's Supper exhibits it as eminently a *SOCIAL* ordinance. The sacraments of the Old Testament, while pertaining to the whole Jewish church, were, in their nature and design, *family* institutions. So are those of the New Economy. Baptism, the initiatory rite of Christianity, has a special regard to parents—and is appointed to be a privilege and blessing to them and to their children. The Lord's Supper, like the Passover which it succeeded and supplanted, is provided for those who are separated from the world, and are numbered, by profession, in “the one family which in heaven and earth is named after Christ.” When it was first instituted, the Redeemer administered it, and partook of it with His disciples, assembled in the upper chamber, as His little family—the objects of His tenderest affections, with whom He greatly desired to have the nearest and sweetest fellowship.

One of the most expressive and significant designations of this ordinance is THE COMMUNION. It is thus called, inasmuch as there is realized in it a more intimate and endeared fellowship with the Master of the feast, and with saints who unite in its observance than in any other ordinance of our holy religion. This fellowship implies loving familiar intercourse with God, and a joint participation of spiritual and heavenly blessings; and it has its sure foundation in the vital union which is effected by the Spirit and by faith, of the members to the Head, and of the members of Christ's mystical body, one to another. The immediate fruit of union is communion; and according as the former is realized and known, so we experience that spiritual fellowship, which constitutes a main element of the happiness of Christians here, and of the blessedness of saints in heaven. A principal design of the ministration of the Gospel is to render the communion of saints with one another, and with God, experimental and practical. “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our

fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”* This implies that in receiving the Gospel-message, and believing the word, we have an interest in “the common salvation;” and, at the same time, we enjoy the closest and most endeared communion with one another. This, again, conducts to the highest privilege in which the perfect felicity of believers chiefly consists—fellowship with the Persons of the adorable Trinity. The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper exhibits in the clearest and fullest manner this holy fellowship, and is a singular means of promoting it.

The Saviour, on the night in which He was betrayed, strongly expressed His desire to enjoy fellowship with His disciples, as a suitable preparation for His embittered sufferings, and the support of His spirit under them. The Apostle Paul, evidently referring to this ordinance, lays a strong emphasis on the communion of believers in it—“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Because there is one body, we, the many are one body, for we are all partakers of that one body.”† In contrast to the “fellowship with devils” which idol-worshippers have in idolatrous feasts, Christians, in their joint participation of Christ’s body and blood, symbolized by the bread and the cup, have fellowship with saints, by means of their living union to the Saviour. This union and communion are full and most intimate. Like as the numerous particles of flour form one loaf, so believers united to Christ, constitute one mystical body, of which they all are members. There is thus a *threefold* communion enjoined—between the Heir who makes the excellent provision and those to whom it is given—between the receivers and the blessings received—and between those who are the joint partakers of the gracious provision. The one, all-perfect sacrifice of Christ is in the Supper, presented symbolically as the food and life of our souls. Appropriating this by faith, we have fellowship with God, as He ever regards the atonement of Christ as a “sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour,” acceptable and pleasing in His sight. We rest with delight on that in which Jehovah is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake—on the travail of

* 1 John i. 3.

† 1 Cor. x. 16, 17—So Grotius, Macknight, and others, translate the seventeenth verse.

the Redeemer's soul, which He sees and is satisfied—that which will be the matter of our exulting praise throughout eternity.

The fellowship of which the Lord's Supper is at once a significant representation, and a precious means of enjoyment is—1. *Communion with God*—and 2. *Communion with saints in heaven and earth.*

I. COMMUNION WITH GOD.

The fellowship of believers with the God of salvation, which is based on spiritual union, and is the immediate and precious fruit of it, is said to lie in *God's giving and their receiving*, and in *the returns which they make* for His gracious benefits. In the application of redemption by the Spirit, God communicates Himself to the souls of His people, and they yield themselves unto Him, as alive from the dead, and return to Him as their quiet and assured Rest. This communion of saints with God is realized here imperfectly, and in its first fruits, and is the beginning and foretaste of heavenly felicity : It is enjoyed completely in heaven, when the saints, made perfect in holiness, see God's face without a cloud,—rest in Him as their “exceeding great Reward,” and are for ever “satisfied with His likeness.”* This fellowship of saints with God, in its present initial state, is with each Person of the blessed Godhead. While, in the Scriptures, it is spoken of as enjoyed with the Father, Son, and Spirit jointly, it is, again, frequently said to be with each of the Divine Persons *distinctly* and *separately*. The same blessings flow to believers from the whole Godhead, and from each single person ; and here, as in other parts of the great affair of human salvation, while particular operations belong to one person and another of the blessed Trinity, all concur and co-operate in carrying forward the wondrous design.

This fellowship which believers have with the separate Persons of the Godhead—which is vividly represented and frequently realized in the ordinance of the Supper, is comprehensively expressed in the Apostolic Benediction—“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—the love of God—and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.” It is communion with the Father in *Love*—with God the Son in *Grace*—and with the Holy Spirit in *effectual working or application*.

* Ps. xvii. 15.

Our fellowship with GOD THE FATHER IS EMINENTLY IN LOVE. "God is love"—and by the work of the Spirit, His love is diffused or shed abroad in our hearts.* The love of God—infinite, eternal, and gratuitous, is ever exhibited in the Scriptures as the origin of the whole purpose and plan of human redemption. He loved elect sinners, and gave His Son to be the propitiation for their sins. The application of the benefits of Christ's purchase to believers flows from the same source. "In His love and in His pity, He redeemed them: and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."† The day of their effectual calling is their "time of love." With the love of friendship, He constantly regards believers, as with complacency He delights in His work in their hearts. "If a man love me," says the Saviour, "my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."‡ The saints have communion with God, in His free, great, and unchangeable love, by receiving it from Him, and by their making adequate returns to Him. They have constant access to Him, as a loving Father through Christ. He pardons, pities, and saves them. He delights to confer upon them all good things for soul and body, and all blessings for time and eternity. Afflictions are to them tokens of fatherly love, and are productive of the best effects. He has the rest and delight of His heart in His people. As from an unfathomable and inexhaustible Fountain, flow forth from Him all streams of goodness and mercy to His saints, so they return back to Him again. As in a bright cloudless day, God's love to His saints shines forth like a glorious Sun, without intermission or decline, increasing in splendour continually. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing."§ Believers have this communion with the Father in love, when they make suitable returns of love to Him. At the time of conversion, they are drawn "with cords of a man, with bands of love."|| They arise and come to Him as their Father, and surrender their hearts to Him. As "He rests in His love" to them, so their souls "return to Him as their rest."¶ Rejecting all objects of creature-affection, they "cleave to the Lord," and delight themselves in Him alone. "Thy

* 1 John iv. 8; Rom. v. 5.

† Isa. lxiii. 9.

‡ John xiv. 23.

§ Zeph. iii. 17.

|| Hosea xi. 4.

¶ Ps. cxvi. 7.

loving kindness is better than life—Hebrew—‘ before lives’*—therefore will I praise Thee.” “ Whom have I in the heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.”†

The fellowship is—

2. WITH THE SON IN GRACE.

“ God is faithful by whom we are called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”‡ Everywhere this is ascribed to His sovereign free grace. He “ dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. And of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.”§ In the apostolic salutations to the churches, this is the pre-eminent blessing sought for them—“ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” “ The Lord Jesus be with you.” The saints have communion with the Son in grace, receiving all kinds of grace from Him, and exercising the graces conferred upon them to His honour and glory. The grace of the Saviour consists not only in His matchless personal excellency—but in the favour and acceptance which He gives to His people, and in the fruits of the Spirit which He largely bestows upon them. Christ, the Beloved, is, in His person, transcendently excellent and comely. He executes the most important offices, and stands to His people in the most endearing relations. Out of His inexhaustible fulness, He gives forth continually to His saints the highest blessings and the most precious privileges. As they are united to Him by the closest spiritual union, they have an interest in all the excellencies of His person and character. They are married to the Lord. He is their glorious Bridegroom and Husband ; and they are His elect, redeemed and sanctified Spouse. Of this conjugal relation the Saviour speaks with the highest satisfaction and delight—“ I will betroth thee unto me for ever ; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness.”|| In this union, the parties mutually and exclusively resign them-

* Augustine explains this of “the several causes of life, that men engage themselves in.” Life, in the whole continuance of it, with all its advantages, may be meant.

† Ps. lxxiii. 3 ; lxxiii. 25

§ John i. 14, 16.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 9.

|| Hosea ii. 19, 20.

selves to each other, and exercise toward one another all holy conjugal affections. The Saviour gives Himself in all His offices and relations, with all His gifts to His saints, and they accept of Him, with entire free willingness and delight in Him, as their best and only Beloved—their sure and blessed Portion for ever. Believers have fellowship with Christ in all His perfections—in the benefits of His purchase—in the glory of His exaltation—in the privileges of His house—in all the immunities of His kingdom on earth, and in the blessedness of His heavenly kingdom. These flow to them from the deep and unfathomable Fountain of grace that is in Him, “as a well of living water, and streams from Lebanon.” The privileges which the saints receive from Christ lead them to regard Him with the most cordial esteem, and with supreme desire and affection. The graces which His Spirit implants in their hearts are called into lively exercise, in ascribing to Him all honour, adoration, and praise. When He stands at the door of the heart and knocks—as they hear His voice and open to Him, He comes in, and they sup with Him and He with them.”*

This near and loving communion is carried on by sharing together the same spiritual provision—by mutual commendatives—by earnest supplications expressed and graciously answered—and by solemn renewed pledges and engagements. The *results* of this communion of the saints with the Redeemer in grace are valuable and blessed beyond expression. They walk at liberty. Theirs is the adoption of sons. They have a right and title to all the privileges of the children of God. They are heirs of the promise—of righteousness—of salvation—of heaven. As children, they are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”† They have the sanctified use of all the creatures and means of grace. They are ever welcome to come with boldness, through the blood of Christ, into the Holiest of all. Afflictions in providence are sent to them in love, and are sweetened by the Saviour’s presence with them in the furnace of trial. They have fellowship with Christ in *His* sufferings—and in *theirs*; and the end and issue will be everlasting communion with Him in His kingdom. “Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”‡

* Rev. iii. 2c.

† Rom. viii. 17.

‡ Rom. v. 23.

3. WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EFFECTUAL WORKING.

The saints enjoy the *fellowship of the Spirit* as an essential part of their communion with God—Philippians ii. 1—“If any fellowship of the Spirit.” This is realized through His efficacious working, in applying to the soul all the benefits of redemption. The Holy Spirit engaged as a consenting and approving Party in the eternal covenant, to put the elect in actual possession of all the benefits of the Saviour’s purchase. He was promised and sent, after the Redeemer’s ascension, to supply the place of His personal presence to His people—to be “the Comforter” to abide with them for ever. His office is to quicken and enlighten—effectually teach and sanctify them. He implants all holy graces; excites them into lively exercise; strengthens and perfects them. He is to saints “the Spirit of grace and supplications”—making intercession within them, and “helping their infirmity.”* He is the witness of Sonship—the seal and earnest of their everlasting inheritance. In all these blessed offices and works, believers have communion with the Holy Spirit. They know the love and freeness of the Spirit. He works effectually in them that believe. They “walk in the Spirit,” experiencing His leading and abounding consolation. They cherish His motions—delighting in holiness—pouring out their hearts in prayer—and bringing forth all the precious fruits of the Spirit. We have fellowship with the Spirit, in His constantly taking the things of Christ and showing them to us. He is in us as a “well of living water”†—sending forth purifying streams, and springing up to life eternal. Our communion with the Spirit—the Comforter, is by abstaining from the evils that grieve Him, and abounding in the holy dispositions and duties in which He delights. The believer should ever with deep humility and admiration regard this blessed fellowship of the Spirit. “The Holy Ghost, in His infinite love and kindness toward me, hath condescended to be my Comforter. He doth it willingly, freely, powerfully. What have I received from Him! In the multitude of my perplexities, how hath He refreshed my soul! Can I live one day without His consolations! And shall I be regardless of Him in that wherein He is concerned? Shall I

* Rom. viii. 26. The Greek word in the correct reading is singular.

† John vii. 37.

grieve Him by negligence, sin, and folly? Shall not His love constrain me to walk before Him in all well-pleasing?"*

In the Lord's Supper, this communion with the separate persons of the Trinity is impressively exhibited; and the ordinance is designed to be a precious means of realizing it. The highest and most valuable privilege which the Sacramental Feast secures to believers is communion with a Three-One God—with the Father in His eternal, unchangeable love—with the Son in rich, sovereign, all-sufficient grace—with the Spirit, in His efficacious working and enlivening consolations.

II. COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

Believers, in the Lord's Supper, are not only called to the enjoyment of communion with God; they are also privileged to have fellowship with saints in heaven and on earth; and the ordinance is an appointed means for realizing and exemplifying this fellowship. The communion of saints is one of the highest privileges which the Gospel confers; and next to communion with God, which it issues in, it forms a chief element of the blessedness of the righteous here and hereafter. In the days of Primitive Christianity, under the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, this fellowship was a distinctive characteristic of the profession of Christian faith. "They continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and fellowship—and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."† The offices and fruits of this holy communion of believers were manifested in a variety of ways. They were seen in frequent assembling together for acts of united worship—in the "community of goods," by which those who had worldly possessions willingly parted with them to supply the necessities of poorer brethren, and in loving domestic intercourse. "They ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."‡ Like one happy family, rejoicing in a common Head and government, and each member willingly sharing the joys and wants and trials of others, they obeyed from the heart the Saviour's new commandment; and the world was compelled to exclaim—"See how those Christians love one another!"

This Christian fellowship, which is designed to be visibly displayed in the Lord's Supper, is an outward manifestation of

* Owen on Communion with God.—Works, Vol. II. p. 266.

† Acts ii. 42.

‡ Acts ii. 44-47; iv. 32-35.

that spiritual communion which exists among saints, as united to Christ the Head. "All believers are vitally united to the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit and by faith. In consequence of this vital though mysterious union, they have not only a representative, but a vital *oneness* with the Saviour—participate in the blessings of His death—receive Divine grace from Him as their living Head—have communion with Him in grace and glory—and have fellowship with one another, as members of the same body."*

This fellowship of saints is—**I. COMMUNION OF THOSE WHO ARE incorporated into one mystical body.** “There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.”† “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.‡ For, by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”§ Thus is it plainly declared that, if we belong to the mystical body of Christ at all, we are in the closest union with all its living members, and we cannot but be partakers of the most intimate fellowship with one and all of them.

2. This fellowship in Christ and in the church is maintained by *holding the same views of Divine truth*, and by *walking in one spirit*. The primitive Christians, taught by the Spirit, were of the same mind and judgment. We are enjoined to have a holy conversation, that we may “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.” ¶ The promise of the covenant fulfilled in regeneration, is—“I will give them a heart to know me; I will give them one heart, and one way.” ¶ The new spirit imparted to all believers is that of common conscious dependence on God, and of mutual dependence on one another. “Whether we live or die we are the Lord’s.” “Now hath God set the members every one in the body as it hath pleased Him.” “None can say to the other, I have no need of thee.” “Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” **

* This is Christ *mystical*—His redeemed, living church, and not Christ *personal*. † Eph. iv. 4.

[†] Eph. iv. 4.

[‡] Reformed Presbyterian Testimony—Doctrinal Part, ch. viii. sect. 4.

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Philip. i. 27.

¶ Jer. xxiv. 7; xxxii. 39.

^{**} I Cor. xii. 18, 21, 26.

3. We have communion with saints *in joint acts of spiritual worship*. Spiritual fellowship is carried on by assembling together at the throne of grace. The early Christians, after the Pentacostal effusion of the Spirit—met daily “with one accord in one place” for united prayer and thanksgiving. Those who fear the Lord, not only “speak often one to another,” but draw nigh, with the same wants, and supplications and praises to Him “who hears prayer,” and who “inhabits Israel’s praise.” Believers, whether congregated in one place, or widely separated, pray for one another; and in intercessory petitions, and in gracious answers received, they realize the benefit and sweetness of such communion. Our praises for mercies received are enhanced by being offered *in company*, or in behalf of fellow-saints, when they experience gracious deliverances, and are made joint partakers of covenant blessings. If in answer to prayer, we receive the gifts of grace or providence from the Redeemer’s hand, we cannot be content to be solitary singers. When we ourselves “sing a new song,” we call upon others to unite with us in fervent praise. “I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall be continually in my mouth.” When others hear of the mercy which we receive and are glad, we invite them to join us in the song—“O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.”*

This communion of saints is realized in other parts of joint worship—in penitential confessions and fastings, and in social vowing and covenanting. While in these exercises we draw near to the One glorious Object of worship, and have communion with Him, we feel that we are one with them that mourn in Zion, and with those who are the devoted subjects of its exalted King. There is no closer or more endeared communion than that which is connected with social covenanting; and its spiritual benefits are largely enjoyed in vows accepted and paid.

4. The communion of saints is known *in common work and sufferings*. Few things bind human hearts more closely together than the union of common arduous and important labour; and few evoke warmer sympathy, and more seasonable help, than to share in mutual trials and sufferings. This is peculiarly the case in work done for Christ the Lord, and in privations and sufferings endured for His name’s sake. With what heartfelt interest and tender affection does the

* Ps. xxxiv. 1-3.

Apostle Paul mention, in his epistles to the churches, those who were his "fellow-labourers"—"true yoke-fellows"—"fellow-soldiers!" What loving, grateful feelings does he express for those who voluntarily shared his imprisonment, and were companions in his bonds! The like fellowship enjoyed by us with brethren engaged in the same service of Christ, and with fellow-sufferers in His cause, will strengthen our hearts, lighten our toil, and teach us to rejoice in tribulation. As the primitive Christians, rejoicing in shame and suffering, went to their own company to offer united praise to God, so will we rejoice betimes that we are counted worthy to suffer shame and reproach for His name's sake.

Lastly, *Mutual partaking of common privileges, and the possession of joyful hopes and prospects* fill up the measure of the saints' spiritual communion. All are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* The inheritance of the saints in light and glory is the predestined lot of all the ransomed in the Lord; and they are *nurtured* for it here, as they live and walk as brethren, and have the privileges of sons. The enjoyment of the privileges of the church visible and invisible pertains to the communion of saints on earth, as the blessedness reserved for the righteous in heaven constitutes the perfect fellowship to which they shall be ultimately introduced. "The visible church hath the privilege of being under God's special care and government; of being preserved and protected in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies; and of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace by Christ to all the members of it in the ministry of the Gospel, testifying that whoever believes in Him shall be saved, and excluding none that will come unto Him." Again—"The communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ is their partaking of the virtue of His mediation, in their justification, adoption, sanctification, and whatever else in this life manifests their union to Him." And furthermore, "The communion in glory which the members of the invisible church have with Christ is in this life, immediately after death, and at last perfected in the day of judgment." "They have communicated to them in this life, the first fruits of glory with Christ, as they are members of Him, their Head, and so in Him are interested in that glory which He is fully possessed of; and as an earnest thereof, enjoy the

* 1 Cor. iii. 22.

sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and hope of glory." "The perfect and full communion which the members of the invisible church enjoy with Christ in glory at the resurrection and day of judgment, is, after the judgment"—to be received into heaven, where they shall be fully and for ever freed from all sin and misery ; filled with inconceivable joys ; made perfectly holy and happy, both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and holy angels ; but especially in the immediate vision and fruition of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity."* These high and blessed privileges, which are conferred in part upon saints here—and are set before them in bright prospects hereafter, are greatly enhanced by being enjoyed in holy fellowship. The excellence of the fellowship of the redeemed in heaven consists in its being shared with perfect saints, without any abatement or interruption for ever and ever.

In the due observance of the ordinance of the Supper, the church appears in its distinctive character, as a select holy society—the family of God in heaven and earth named after Christ. They are gathered into the Father's house to share all its blessed provision. Christ Jesus appears as "the First-Born among many brethren"—Himself dispensing the spiritual food of His table, and condescending to share the feast with them. They are brought to the "Banqueting House," ransomed by His blood, clothed with His righteousness, and constrained by His love. Gathered out of the world, and rising above it, they regard one another as children of the same Father—fellow-pilgrims—and as heirs together of God and the heavenly kingdom. Persons of all classes and nationalities meet in holy brotherhood—the distinction of rich and poor, learned and unlearned, bond and free, are unknown. All are "one in Christ," the Head. "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free—but Christ is All and in all."† They appear in the same character of renewed sinners—are associated by the same Spirit of light and love ; they utter the same language of prayer and praise, and cherish the same blessed hope. They profess a common confidence in the God of salvation, and have mutual dependence on each other. The fellowship of saints is strictly *invisible*, but it is expressed

* Larger Catechism—Quest. 53–69.

† Col. iii. 11.

in action, and becomes visible in the practice and conduct of believers at the Lord's Supper. Others take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus—and are constrained to exclaim, as they behold the sacramental host—"How goodly are thy tents, O Israel, and thy tabernacles, O Jacob!"*

That the *fellowship of saints may be realized in the Lord's Supper*, several things are obviously required. These cannot be overlooked or neglected without marring or preventing any real spiritual communion. There plainly cannot be such fellowship, when the ordinance is dispensed, as is done, in some sections of the Protestant church, to *individuals alone*, or to sick or dying persons. We have no warrant whatever for this in apostolic practice. The ordinance is in its very nature social—being appointed for the family of God. To administer it in private to individuals, is to rob the church collective of one of its highest privileges, and to deprive it of most weighty and valuable instruction. Too frequently, the reception of it in private is regarded as a means of removing past sins, and a *passport* or *viaticum* to heaven. The safety of mind of dying persons is connected with the exercise of faith in the Saviour; and this may be more properly drawn faith by the word of the Gospel, than by means of a service which is superstitious and may lead to a dangerous delusion. Again, if we would enjoy the fellowship of saints in the ordinance, all care should be taken that those who are admitted to partake of it should be distinguished by *a holy profession and an unblemished character*. Righteousness can have no fellowship with unrighteousness, nor light with darkness; and *concord there can be none between Christ and Belial*. If we would keep the sacramental feast aright, "the leaven of malice and wickedness" must be "purged away;" and it is to be kept "with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."† While it is granted that the possession of real saintship cannot be the law of admission as far as man is concerned, either to the fellowship of the church, or to sealing ordinances; at the same time it is ever to be maintained that an intelligent profession of Gospel truth, and consistent character and conduct are indispensable. Unworthy persons aggravate their sin, and can only eat and drink judgment to themselves, by partaking of the sacramental feast; and those have a part in their sin and condemnation who encourage them, and who do not all in

* Num. xxiv. 5.

† 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

their power to restrain them. The mingling of believers and unbelievers together in sealing ordinances is wholly opposed to the communion of saints. There are few evils in our day in the churches of worse demerit, and more fatal consequences, than the indiscriminate admission of persons of all classes and characters to sealing ordinances. It reduces and degrades the fellowship of the church to a low worldly level—pollutes a Christian profession—sets aside all faithful discipline—fosters a dangerous delusion—administers an opiate to the conscience, and causes multitudes to “perish with a lie in their right hand.” The profanation of sacred mysteries can only tend to the aggravated condemnation of those who are chargeable with it. While we admit that we cannot in every case know who are hypocrites, and who are genuine believers in the church; and therefore we are unable wholly to exclude the unworthy—this is a far different matter from opening the door of admission to the ignorant and scandalous, and to such as show plainly by their life and conduct, that they are still enemies to the cross of Christ.

To maintain, as some do, that the Lord's Supper is a *converting ordinance*, and that therefore all should be encouraged to partake of it, is plainly in opposition to its nature and design, as set forth in the New Testament. That persons may be awakened to solemn consideration by witnessing its administration, and that some may become new creatures, through the blessing upon such means of grace, we do not deny. But the ordinance is provided for the friends of Christ, and is not designed in itself for enemies, with a view to making them friends. It is a *sealing ordinance* for ratifying and confirming covenant blessings to those who are already in the covenant, and in no sense to those whose names are not “in the writing of the house of Israel.” The Supper is a feast of communion with the Lord of the ordinance, and with His saints; and only such as are real saints have His warrant and welcome to the entertainment graciously provided. His servants are only warranted to admit those to the King's Table, who recognise His sovereign authority, obey His laws, and honour Him in their lives.* In the days of the First Refor-

* For a clear and full statement of the character of those who are unfit to partake of the Lord's Supper, and who should be excluded from it, see Charnock's *Discourse on the Subjects of the Lord's Supper*, Works, vol. iv. pp. 433-436.

mation in Scotland, we are told, that it was customary for an aged elder to proclaim aloud in the hearing of the congregation—just as communicants were about to take their seats at the Lord's table—“*Holy mysteries are for holy men.*” In a prediction of Ezekiel, which evidently refers to the times of the New Testament, it is declared—“This is the law of the house : Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.”*

* Ezek. xlivi. 10.

CHAPTER XI.

ROMISH PERVERSIONS OF THE ORDINANCE OF THE SUPPER.

THE ordinance of the Supper, as it was dispensed by our Lord and His apostles, and as it existed in the primitive church, was distinguished for its simplicity and purity. Prescribed by the Saviour to be observed by His followers, as a perpetual memorial of His death, and as a means of communion with Himself, it was unaccompanied with burdensome rites, and was free from human inventions. Dispensed in connection with the preaching of the word, and as a part of public worship, assembled Christians were admonished of the need of due preparation ; and the material elements being set apart as ordained signs to represent spiritual things, they partook of them in obedience to the Saviour's command, to testify their reception by faith of the blessings provided. Nothing could be simpler than this institution. Christians of the humblest capacity could apprehend by the symbolical representation the great objects of faith and hope.

As corruption in doctrine and practice rose and spread in the early Christian church, its progress was particularly marked by perversions of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which were introduced gradually, until, through the addition of numerous unauthorized rites and human inventions, the original institution was altogether lost sight of ; and there was foisted into the church a pretended sacramental service, standing in all respects in the most marked contrast to that which the Saviour, on the eve of His death and ascension, appointed. The germs of the corruption of these ordinances first appeared in the highly figurative and extravagant language which some of the early Christian Fathers use when speaking of them. Thus, in their rhetorical and impassioned utterances, they designate Baptism the "laver of regeneration"—and speak of persons baptized as thereby putting on Christ, both His divinity and humanity—and of Christ coming down by the invocation, and joining Himself to the waters of baptism.

Chrysostom goes so far as to tell a person who is baptized, that he “immediately embraces his Lord in his arms, and that he is united to His body—nay, compounded or consubstantiated with that body which sits above, whither the devil has no access.” Speaking of the other Sacrament in the like inflated language, these Fathers designate the table an altar—a holy, immaculate table, not to be touched by any but the priests, and that with the greatest reverence; and they speak of the bread after consecration, as being made and called the body of Christ. It is evident that in the case of these early writers, though their views were in many cases confused and self-contradictory—many of the expressions which they used were merely rhetorical and not intended to be taken in a literal sense. By referring to statements which they make in other parts of their writings, it is plain that they were far from holding the dogmas of baptismal regeneration, or of the real presence in the Lord’s Supper, as these were maintained in subsequent ages. Then, as the ministers of the church came to be regarded as a priesthood, whose function it was to stand at an altar and offer a sacrifice—and as one order of the ministry claimed the exclusive right above others to administer the sacraments, these ordinances were divested of their simplicity, and regarded as high and awful *mysteries*. Those who administered them were considered to be endowed with extraordinary power;—the material elements were spoken of as transmuted by the words of consecration into other substances, and Christ was said to be present in a preternatural manner, such as He is not in any other ordinance. Still it was but slowly throughout the church, that human accretions increased so as to pervert completely the nature of these ordinances. It was only when the “mystery of iniquity” had spread widely, and the system of Antichrist had become largely developed that the *sacrificial theory* of the eucharist was inculcated and believed, and that transubstantiation and the mass became authoritative dogmas, to be received under pain of damnation for their rejection.

The doctrine of the Romish church respecting the Lord’s Supper, or the Eucharist, as they most commonly designate it, is that Christ Jesus is present in the ordinance, not spiritually as the Reformed churches generally teach, but *corporeally*, by the bread and wine being changed into His body and blood. The Council of Trent is very precise and explicit on this sub-

ject, denouncing repeated anathemas on all such as deny in any measure this transubstantiation. Thus they declare—"If any one denies, that in the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so a whole Christ is contained truly, really and substantially—but shall say that He is only in it, as in a sign or figure, or by an influence, let him be accursed." A like curse is pronounced upon those who deny that there is a wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood of Christ—the species of bread and wine only remaining. Which conversion the Catholic Church most fitly styles "transubstantiation"—and again, those are anathematized who deny that "in the Eucharist a whole Christ is contained under each species, or in each separate part of either species." With the greatest minuteness—as if to prevent all possibility of mistaking the meaning, the Romish authorities set forth this doctrine. By the act of consecration, nothing whatever of the substance or essence of the elements remains—but only the sensible properties, as form, colour, taste, odour, specific gravity and nutritive quality. So far as the senses, or physics are concerned, no change has taken place; and yet are we to believe that, as the sensible properties of bread and wine cannot inhere in the substance of Christ's body and blood, nor in any other substance—then it is the very body that hung upon the cross, and the blood that flowed from the side of Christ—with, as the Tridentine Fathers say—"His bones, nerves, and whatever pertains to the completeness of man," that is, present under the species of bread and wine. Romanists thus regarding the sacramental elements changed by consecration as the body of Christ, with which His soul and divinity are inseparably connected, teach that the Host or consecrated wafer is to be worshipped with the highest kind of worship—*Latreia*—that which is to be given alone to the supreme God—not that the wafer as such is to be worshipped, but as the substance has become the body, bones, blood and divinity of the incarnate Saviour! This plainly implies that if the dogma of transubstantiation is false, the worship of the Host, being that of a creature, is pure and unmasked idolatry. This charge, which is brought by Protestants against the Popish system is admitted by some Romish writers themselves to be just, if the doctrine is not

true. Thus a Jesuit * says—“If there be no transubstantiation, their error who worship for God an image of gold, or any other matter, as the Gentiles worshipped their gods, or that worship a red cloth upon the top of a spear, as they say the Laplanders do, or that worship living creatures, as the Egyptians were wont to do, is much more tolerable than their error who worship a piece of bread.”

The arguments by which Romanists labour to establish the doctrine of transubstantiation are partly taken from Scripture. Thus, they lay great stress upon the words of the institution—“*This is my Body*”—contending vehemently, as did Luther, that the words can only be taken literally. They blame Protestants with taking away the sacrament, and perverting the Saviour’s declaration, when they explain the phrase figuratively. It has been frequently shown that it is a common usage not only in the Eastern tongues but likewise in most modern languages, to speak of the sign as of the thing represented. This is especially true of the phraseology of Scripture in all parts of it. Thus the bow in the cloud is said to be the covenant with Noah—the rock smitten in Horeb “was Christ”—the seven kine, and the seven ears in Pharaoh’s dream are respectively termed “seven years.” Throughout the whole course of His ministry, our Lord’s discourses were spoken in language which absolutely demands a figurative exposition; and in cases not a few, the literal interpretation is quite incapable of unfolding the meaning, and those who so applied our Lord’s words, completely misunderstood them. When, for instance, He spake of giving His flesh to eat, of the temple of His body, and of the leaven of the Pharisees—they took these expressions in their literal sense, and so perverted our Lord’s words. So when He spoke of a spiritual birth and regeneration, they took Him to mean a second natural birth. He who said of Himself, “I am the true vine”—“I am the door”—“I am the good shepherd”—using on all these occasions words which could only be understood metaphorically, could also say “This is my body,” to set forth the relation which He sustained to His followers. To claim that this single expression must only be taken to express a literal fact, is simply by bare unsupported assertion to assume the whole point in dispute, and is, besides, to disregard the form and pervading spirit of our Lord’s teaching.

* Costerus.

It is noteworthy that, in the formula of institution, as given by the evangelists, and especially by the apostle Paul, the sacramental elements are spoken of as bread and wine equally *after* as *before* consecration — thus clearly showing that no translation of substance has taken place. Popish theologians and controversialists themselves are compelled to depart from the literal sense in explaining the language in which the Supper was instituted. The apostles hearing our Lord's words, and partaking of the Last Supper—if they interpreted His words literally, must have received them as meaning that the bread which He held in His hand, broke and distributed to them was the same body in which He had been their companion—as had walked with them, ate and slept, and now sat and spake with them at the Supper, and remained alive, with all its parts —after it had been broken, divided, distributed among them, and eaten by them. The statements which Romanists make on this subject are contradictory and utterly irreconcilable. They maintain that the *substance* of the elements is taken away —being converted into the substance of Christ's flesh and Divinity, while yet the accidents of bread and wine—size, colour, and taste remain. The absurdity of this, and its palpable contrariety to all physical laws are easily perceived. A corporeal substance cannot exist without accidents, nor accidents without their own substance. It is utterly impossible that the accidents or sensible properties of bread and wine should remain, if the substance is changed. The miracles recorded in Scripture when conversion of substance took place, rendered it apparent to the senses, that there was a complete change of the accidents, as well as the substance—both of the thing changed, and in relation to that into which it was changed. Thus, when the rod of Moses became a serpent, none of the accidents of the rod remained, and the object into which it was changed had the colour, shape and quality of a serpent. And, when at the marriage in Cana, the water was changed into wine, the new substance neither retained the taste nor smell of water—but gave clear manifestation of the qualities and accidents of wine.

In the Tridentine Catechism—Question 31st—pastors are enjoined to teach carefully that “in this sacrament there is contained, not only the true body of Christ, but whatsoever pertains to the character of a true body, such as bones and nerves, and also Christ whole and entire.” Yet, in another

question, the 42d, they are to teach that Christ is not present in this sacrament as in *a place*, for place regards things themselves as they possess magnitude. Christ is in the sacrament, as He is a substance, and not as great or small. The substance of the bread is changed into the substance of Christ, not into His magnitude or quantity. Substance, no one will doubt, is contained in a small as well as in a large place." This is very like affirming the same thing as was before denied. When it is most positively asserted, as fundamental to all right faith on the subject, that the sacramental elements, by consecration, are changed "into Christ's true human body," with "its nerves and bones," surely this can only be by its occupying space, and having a certain magnitude. Romish writers labour much, by argument and analogy, to bring the dogma of Transubstantiation to be apprehended by reason; and then, as if conscious of failure in the attempt, they are accustomed to speak of it as "an awful mystery," only to be apprehended by faith. They thus give up entirely the principle on which they lay so much stress—that of a literal interpretation, and thus virtually surrender the whole question.

Again, the language employed in the words of institution concerning the cup is inconsistent with a literal interpretation; while the mutilation of the sacrament, by withholding the cup from the laity, renders the Eucharist, as celebrated by the Romish Church, wholly different from the Lord's Supper, as enjoined in sacred Scripture. Romish theologians bend their main strength to the exposition of our Lord's words respecting the bread, while they say little or nothing about the consecration of the wine.. The evangelists say—"This is my blood of the new covenant shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28). "This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many" (Mark xiv. 24). "This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you" (Luke xxii. 20). If this is to be taken literally, it must mean that the *cup* is really the new covenant and the blood which it provides, or by which it is confirmed. Romanist casuists themselves will hardly have the boldness to maintain that the *cup*—the vessel itself—is changed into the blood of Christ—and yet this alone is affirmed, on the ground of requiring the naked literal interpretation.

Then again, the Saviour positively commanded—"Drink ye all of it" (Matt. xxvi. 27). In open and palpable violation

of this authoritative precept of the Lord of the feast, Romanists withhold the cup from the laity ; and enjoin them to receive the Eucharist only in one kind, while, at the same time, both elements are to be partaken of by the priesthood. They teach that the whole Christ is in the wine, as well as in the bread, and in each and every particle of both species ; and they denounce a curse on such as say that a whole Christ is not bodily present, and fully partaken of, when the consecrated host is eaten. In this we have a marked instance of the Romish Antichrist, " changing the laws," and rendering " the word of God of none effect by their traditions." It is admitted by Romish theologians that the withholding of the cup from the people is contrary to the original institution, and at variance with the practice of the primitive church. Yet they defend it, on the ground that the cup is unnecessary to the right reception of the sacrament. The bread transmuted is the body of Christ which contains the blood ; and therefore He who receives the one receives the other. Whole Christ—body, soul, and divinity—is in each species, and in every particle of both ; and, consequently, all the benefit of partaking is enjoyed by using one of the elements. Again, they plead, that if the cup were used by the laity, there would be danger of spilling some of the wine ; and as this is the real blood of Christ, there is special need to guard, in every possible way, against such a profanation. Who may not see, however, that there is like danger of dropping some particles of the bread, which, on the Romish principle, contain the whole Christ ; and that, on the same ground, the bread may likewise be kept from the laity ? Could not the Lord, moreover, foresee and provide against such danger, when He gave the command—" Drink ye all of it ?" While the Church of Rome, as if wiser than the Saviour and His apostles, rules that it is sufficient to administer half the original feast to the laity—assuring them that when they eat the Host, they, in fact, eat and drink both the body and blood, and the soul and divinity of Christ, the priests eat the bread and drink the wine, and thus, instead of one, they partake of two full and perfect sacraments. The Papal Church, by prohibiting the use of the cup to the laity, employs its blasphemous prerogative to abrogate Divine prescriptions by its own arbitrary decree. It thus robs the Christian people of what the Saviour left them as their inalienable privilege ; and it sets up in reality an antichristian invention in the place of

the Lord's Supper.* Romish writers very generally appeal to our Lord's discourse in John vi, in proof of the doctrine of Transubstantiation. The most devoted Popish advocates generally assume that this discourse treats directly of the Eucharist, and that the eating of Christ's flesh and blood, spoken of in it, is literal manducation by the mouth, and not spiritual by faith. While, in former times, members of the highest authorities, and most eminent theologians of the Romish Church denied that this chapter bears any direct relation to the Eucharist,† it is commonly referred to by modern Popish controversialists, as supplying an incontrovertible argument in favour of the change of the natural elements for which they contend. Some of these writers, seemingly conscious of the difficulty of explaining all that is contained in the chapter in accordance with their theory, divide it into two parts, one of which is taken to speak of partaking of Christ's flesh and blood literally in the Eucharist, and the other of feeding spiritually by faith on the promised blessings of salvation. This division is, however, wholly gratuitous and arbitrary, and is evidently made in order to sustain a foregone conclusion. It is plainly contradicted by the same theme being continued, and the same truths taught in both the proposed divisions of the chapter. Besides, even on the principle maintained by these Romish writers, the literal interpretation of the Saviour's words

* We have a notable instance of the want of candour and halting logic of Romish casuists in a recent controversy between Cardinal Manning and Lord Redesdale, as reported in the "*Daily Telegraph*" of Oct. 16, 1875, and following numbers, concerning the withholding of the cup from the laity. The Cardinal says—"Our Lord ordained that the holy sacrament should be consecrated and received by His apostles in both kinds; *but He did not ordain that it should be received by all Christians in both kinds.*" This would obviously limit the obligation of obedience on the part of all Christians, except the apostles, to such injunctions as were directly addressed to them. If our Lord did not ordain that the sacrament should be received by all Christians in both kinds, neither, on this mode of inference, did He ordain that it should be received by *any* Christian, except the apostles in *either* kind. On the principle assumed by the Cardinal, it may be inferred that the bread may be denied to the laity, and that the sacrament may be abolished altogether. "If the sacrament be obligatory at all, it is obligatory as a whole; if it be not obligatory as a whole, it is not obligatory at all."—See Mellor's Congregational Lecture on the "*Priesthood.*" p. 167, 168.

† Albertinus, in his work, "*De Eucharistia*," quotes two popes, four cardinals, five bishops, and several doctors, professors, and preachers, who deny that the sixth chapter of John refers to the sacrament of the Supper.

plainly condemns the practice of communion in one kind, for those who drink not His blood are said to have no life in them. And again, if the Saviour's words in this chapter apply exclusively to the Eucharist, then those who receive it in both kinds as the Romish priests do, have eternal life. As according to the Popish theory the bread and wine are *objectively*, not *subjectively*, the body and blood of Christ, so whosoever eats and drinks the consecrated elements—whatever be their character—without faith or any other grace—however degraded and vile—living and dying in mortal sin—is certain of eternal life. Appropriately has it been remarked, that “while the latter destroys the laity, however good, because they do not ‘drink the blood,’ it saves the priests, however bad, because they both eat the flesh and drink the blood.”*

The doctrine of transubstantiation is opposed to all right reason, and is fraught with the greatest absurdities. It requires us to disbelieve the testimony of our senses, and so to set aside one of the fundamental laws of our nature; it thus subverts the foundation of all knowledge, faith, and religion. The evidence of consciousness and of testimony is equally discredited. On the Romish principle, there can be no faith, for it comes by hearing, and this by the word of God. All proof of miracles fails, for this depends on the evidence of the senses. The existence of God, as proved by His works and that of an external world—the doctrine of providence—the practical conduct of life—all make a constant appeal to the testimony of our senses; and if this is not to be credited, then are we left in the thick darkness of Atheism—and of practical infidelity of the worst kind. If we cannot trust to the certainty of our senses, we cannot be sure of aught that God has revealed in His word, and consequently of no matter of faith whatever. Even the solemn dictum of the infallible church, which declares the consecrated wafer to be Christ's very body and blood may be disbelieved, since the senses cannot be trusted as if they heard the words of consecration. The principle that is assumed as fundamental by Romanists in defending the dogma of transubstantiation involves the disbelief of the laws which God has impressed on our nature; and it thus opens the way to universal scepticism. Need we wonder that so many of the educated classes in Popish countries, become avowed and reckless infidels?

* Mellor on Priesthood, p. 184.

The absurdities involved in the doctrine of transubstantiation are numerous, and revolting to all right reason. They are such as these : There are substances without accidents, and accidents which are exactly the same, while yet the substances are wholly different. The bread held in the Saviour's hand, which was broken and given to His disciples, was His one only body, that was then living and speaking, and that was afterwards suspended on the cross. This body has no definite dimensions, since it is in every particle of the wafer, and yet it has definite dimensions, as it sits at God's right hand in the heavens. A part is equal to the whole. The body of Christ in heaven has not the properties of bread ; the body of Christ on the altar has the properties of bread, and yet these two bodies are one and the same. Romanists in eating the consecrated host, eat and receive into their bodily system the very bones, blood, and divinity of the Redeemer. A doctrine more absurd—a rite more disgusting and abominable than this cannot be found in any form of heathen idolatry, either in ancient or modern times.*

The practical evils resulting from the inculcation and belief of transubstantiation are manifold, and of the worst kind. It generates infidelity, and prepares the way for the grossest superstition. If persons are brought wholly to discredit the testimony of their senses, and to believe that what all the senses testify has the properties of bread and wine, is the body of Christ, in His whole humanity and Godhead, then they may believe anything, however contradicted by all sensible evidence. It leads directly to idolatry, for though Romish writers declare that it is not the wafer which they worship, but the substance of Christ's body, into which it is changed by consecration, yet it is undeniable that in practice the material element is the object of adoration.

With the doctrine of transubstantiation is intimately connected that of the *Mass*, which the Council of Trent declares, under pain of eternal damnation, is to be regarded as a true and proper sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. Romanists further teach, that this is the very same sacrifice as Christ offered on the cross as a propitiation for sin. It is the continuation, or constant repetition of the same sacrifice. The offering of sacrifice implies a priest and an altar ; and

* Several of these absurdities are vividly exposed in Mellor's work on "Sacerdotalism," pp. 186, 187.

hence the ministers of the word are to be viewed as priests, appointed to present in the mass the great sacrifice of expiation. Without their services, no sinner can have access to God to obtain pardon and acceptance. At the same time, with strange inconsistency, Romish writers maintain that it is not the priest who offers the sacrifice, but Christ who offers Himself daily in the mass.* That the ministers of religion are, in any sense, priests, and that their chief function is to offer sacrifice, is a doctrine without the least warrant in the New Testament; and that the atoning sacrifice of Christ is repeated, is in express contradiction to the most explicit testimony of Christ and His apostles. The apostle Paul, especially, throughout the epistle to the Hebrews, insists strongly on Christ being the great and only Priest of the church, and on the perfection of His sacrifice; and lays particular stress upon the fact of the atonement being *once* made, and on this being sufficient to put away all the sins of His people for ever. Not fewer than eight or nine times in this epistle does the apostle emphatically declare that Christ Jesus offered himself "once"—and that, by His "one offering"—not to be repeated, He has satisfied Divine justice—expiated human transgression, and perfected for ever them that are sanctified. On many grounds, the Mass or the Eucharist, as a propitiatory sacrifice, is to be condemned and rejected. It is destitute of all scriptural warrant, and is contrary to the declared nature and ends of the sacrament of the Supper. Whether viewed in its original institution, or according to the practice of the apostles, this is in no sense a sacrifice, but an ordinance commemorative of Christ's finished sacrifice, and an appointed means of proclaiming or showing forth His death. The mass, as a propitiatory sacrifice, is founded on the doctrine of transubstantiation, which we have shown to be unscriptural and absurd; and it is therefore a falsehood and a deceit, calculated only to lead souls to destruction. It is derogatory to the atonement of Christ, as it virtually proclaims its imperfection, in showing that it needs to be repeated. The one all-perfect satisfaction for sin is regarded as insufficient, for

* Cardinal Gossuet (*Theol.*, vol. ii. p. 522), as quoted by Hodge (vol. iii. p. 687), says—"Finally, the eucharistic sacrifice is made by the hands of the priest, but Jesus Christ is the principal minister; He is at once priest and victim, offering Himself to God the Father, by the ministry of His priests."

masses for the living and the dead are required to be offered daily, in order to obtain pardon and acceptance with God. Whatever tarnishes the glory of the cross is to be regarded as the most daring blasphemy—to place dependence on aught else for salvation is most deceiving and ruinous. The Romish mass, in whatever light it is considered, is, in all respects, utterly opposed to the nature, mode, and ends of the Lord's Supper. The authority which sanctions it, is, in the fullest sense, antichristian—arrayed against the power of Christ—obscuring and extinguishing the glory of His cross, and robbing Him of the prerogative of forgiving sin, and of receiving sinners to heaven. Celebrated by an interested priesthood, as a propitiatory oblation for the sins of the living and the dead, it is the source of enormous pecuniary gain to the Papacy. It secures to Romish priests a boundless control over human consciences; and in the family, the church, and the state, in life and in death, and in the invisible world, it reduces millions into slavish subjection to their will. Well did John Knox and others of the Reformers characterize the mass as the great idol—the Moloch of Popery—and denounce it as the source of abominations more foul than pagan idolatry has ever produced. With the most plausible defences of transubstantiation and the mass, as given by Bossuet, and Wiseman, and Manning, and the most philosophical and mitigated views of Romanism, as offered by Moehler, the representation which they yet give of the Eucharist can only be regarded as the vilest caricature of Christ's ordinance—as the complete taking away from the church a divine institution, and substituting for it a human ordinance, singularly fitted to pander to the pride and avarice of the priesthood, and to effect the moral debasement and ruin of their deluded victims.

CHAPTER XII.

RITUALISTIC PERVERSIONS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

IN the Reformation of the sixteenth century, as it spread through different countries, Protestants became unhappily divided on the subject of the sacrament of the Supper. These divisions resisted various attempts of earnest men to heal them. They served to range the Protestant forces into hostile camps, and thus to weaken and discourage them in the conflict with a common inveterate enemy. They exist in continental Protestant nations till the present day, and are a main cause of the Reformation failing to accomplish its mission, in winning multitudes to the acknowledgment of scriptural truth. The grand question on which different views were entertained among the German and Swiss Reformers, had respect to the mode of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, and how He is partaken of in communicating in the ordinance. In general, it was held, on all sides, that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ as a memorial of His death—that, under the symbols of bread and wine, His body and blood are presented, as offered for the remission of sin ; and as sealed and applied by the Spirit, believers have thus their union to Christ and fellowship one with another confirmed, and obtain spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. The Reformers of all classes maintained that, in some sense, the real presence of Christ is to be enjoyed in the sacrament. The Reformed held that this presence was not corporeal but spiritual. Believers receive by faith Christ's flesh and blood, not as material, but His body broken and blood shed spiritually. In partaking of the elements there is no mixture or commutation of substances, but an apprehension by faith, and a union through the indwelling and operation of the Holy Spirit.

Luther, in his views of the sacrament, took his stand on the words of institution—"This is my body," which, with the most persistent obstinacy, he refused to understand in any other sense than in the most literal way. As he did not admit the Romish doctrine of a change of substances following the

act of consecration, he held that the natural body and blood of Christ—which was born of the virgin, and suffered on the cross, was present in the Supper, *with, by, and under* the material elements. This is generally termed CONSUBSTANTIATION, and sometimes IMPANATION.* It is deserving of remark that if the phrase “This is my body,” is taken in the strict literal sense, then the Romish doctrine that the substance of the bread has become the substance of Christ’s body, and not Luther’s, must be accepted ; and again, that to affirm that the bread remains bread, and yet that the body of Christ is with, in, and under it, is to give up altogether the literal sense, and to use the words with a figurative meaning. The Lutheran doctrine of the very body and blood of Christ being present with the elements would seem to teach that the body of the risen Saviour which is in heaven is locally present in the sacrament. This, though denied by Luther, has always been regarded by the Reformed as the Lutheran doctrine of the

* *Impanation*—The doctrine of *Impanation*, as modifying or differing from that of Consubstantiation, and held by some Lutheran divines—as the late Dr Hahn of Leipzig—is thus stated by Dr Hodge : “As in man the soul is united to the body, imparting to it life and efficiency without itself becoming material, or rendering the body spirit ; and as the Eternal Logos became flesh by taking to Himself a true body and a reasonable soul, without raising anything human into His divine nature, or imparting divinity to His humanity, so the same Logos becomes united with the consecrated bread, without any substantial change in it or in Him. His relation to the bread, however, is analogous to that of the soul to the body in man, and of the Logos to humanity in the person of our Lord. As the assumption of our nature by the Son of God is expressed by the word “incarnation,” so his assumption and union with the bread in the Lord’s Supper is called “impanation.” Hahn labours to show that, by holding the doctrine of *impanation*, the error of Luther respecting the ubiquity of Christ’s material body is avoided. He says in his doctrinal work on Christian Faith (p. 603), “Luther was right in rejecting the doctrine of transubstantiation, and he would have been right had he taught that with *in, with, and under* the bread and wine in the holy Supper, we actually and essentially or really receive the present person Jesus Christ, or the Logos, and hence this bread and this wine are the body and blood of Christ, wherein He now communicates the bread which is from heaven to believers, as formerly when He came in literal flesh and blood, He gave Himself to them. But Luther erred when he asserted that with, in, and under the bread and wine, the real body which suffered for us, and the blood of Jesus Christ which was shed for us, are communicated, because, according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. xv. 45-50), the spiritual, heavenly body of our glorified Lord is not flesh and blood ; and a body, whatever be its nature, cannot as body be ubiquitous.”—Hodge’s Systematic Theology, vol. iii., note pp. 648, 649.

sacrament ; and it is difficult to see that what they positively teach, does not lead to this conclusion. Again, Lutherans, in vindicating their position, were forced to maintain in a sense the *ubiquity* of Christ's material body, and some of their writers did not hesitate to maintain such an irrational, unscientific view. But the explanation which they offered of this sentiment was that the presence of the body of Christ in the communion is peculiar. It does not take place through the utterance of the words of consecration by the minister, but through the almighty power of Christ, attending the words as first uttered by Him, and continuing to operate wherever the ordinance is administered. According to Luther, the body and blood of Christ are partaken of in the sacrament *corporeally*, by the organ of the mouth, and not spiritually by faith, as the Reformed say. They insist however that this participation is not after the manner of ordinary food, but is supernatural and incomprehensible. Various statements of Luther, in his writings on the sacrament, would not however appear to admit this distinction.* The body and blood of Christ in and with the consecrated elements is, according to Lutherans, received equally by believers and unbelievers—by the former for the confirmation of their faith and spiritual nourishment, but by the latter to their hurt.†

The doctrine of consubstantiation is liable to several of the objections that lie against the Romish tenet of transubstantiation. It is contradictory to Scripture—straining an expression which is plainly figurative to yield a meaning which is at once repugnant to common sense, and to the principles of natural science. While contending for a strictly literal interpretation, Lutherans are forced to have recourse to a meaning which the words of institution can much less bear than that of the transubstantiation of substance. To hold that the same body can be at the same time in heaven, and corporeally present in the Supper; and that a material body, limited by properties, can be everywhere present at the sametime, is plainly opposed to fundamental physical laws. As the Romish dogma is palpably inconsistent with the nature and ends of the sacraments, which is to commemorate the body and blood of Christ—and not to act faith on them as being corporeally present, so the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation is likewise contrary to

* Hodge, p. 669.

† Doctrine of the Reformed—Formula of Concord—Hodge, p. 667.

its grand design. It need not be thought strange that in Lutheran countries, and in many Lutheran churches, the necessity of faith and of Christian character as qualifications for admission to the ordinance of the Supper should be overlooked—that the communion should be forsaken by large numbers connected with the church—and that attendance should only be made upon it, on mere political grounds or to secure worldly interests.

One of the most recent and wide-spread perversions of the sacrament of the Supper is that which has taken place within the National Church of England during the last forty years, and which has likewise of late spread to some extent in Episcopal communities in other countries. This is now generally regarded as one of the distinctive tenets of the party in the English Church, designated *Anglicans* or *Neo-Catholics* or *Ritualists*. From an early period in the history of the Episcopal Establishment, there were some, both of the dignitaries and of the clergy and people, who, in some manner, favoured views of the sacrament of the Supper, which resembled the Popish doctrine, concerning the Real Presence, and the sacrificial and sacerdotal views of the ordinance. Especially after the time of the Restoration, these opinions spread and were advocated by several writers of the same name in the National Church.* It was however in connexion with what has been recently termed the *Catholic Revival*, that the Ritualistic sacramental theory and rites came into prominent notice; and in late years, they have been widely diffused—have found some able advocates in persons of acknowledged learning in the ministry of the Established Church, or who have relinquished their position in it for the fold of the Papacy—and are now openly professed by considerable numbers throughout the National Establishment. When the first movement took place within the Church of England, that aimed to bring back the church to Catholic unity—between forty and fifty years ago, and found expression in the “*Tracts for the Times*,” the Protestant doctrines declared in the Articles, Prayer Book, and Homilies of the Established Church of England, were opposed or explained away, and the Popish dogma of transubstantiation was spoken of in such a way as to represent it as not essentially different from the doctrine set forth in the Articles of the National Church. Speaking with special

* See Dr Stoughton's History of the Church in England.

favour of the patristic view of the Eucharist, which however he evidently mistakes, Dr Pusey says—"My own conviction is that our Articles deny transubstantiation in one sense, and that the Roman Church, according to the explanation of the Council of Trent, affirms it in another."* He thus plainly hints that some explanation might bring the two views into perfect agreement. Several of the leading Ritualists, or Catholic Revivalists, use still plainer language, in declaring that their views of the sacrament of the Supper are accordant with those of the Romish Church. Thus, one says—"The Church of England holds precisely the same views of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as the Church of Rome."† Another, as if expanding the words of the decree of the Council of Trent, declares—"By the Eucharistic sacrifice is not meant merely a sacrifice of prayer and praise ; nor does the Eucharistic sacrifice merely mean the offering of ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto God ; still less does it mean the offering of bread and wine for use in the sacrament, which nevertheless because they are thus offered, are called oblations ; but the Eucharistic sacrifice is Christ Himself, supernaturally present in the sacrament—the Victim slain once for all upon the cross, but continuously offered before God in memory of that death by His own natural presence in heaven, and by His supernatural presence in the sacrament here on earth."‡

It may be admitted that there are some differences between the Ritualistic or Neo-Catholic view of the sacrament of the Supper, and the Romish—but, in two important assumptions they are one. 1. The body of Christ—that which suffered on the cross, and which is now in heaven, is really present on the altar in the communion ; and 2. It is there as offered in sacrifice. The minister who dispenses the Eucharist acts as a priest, presenting a real victim to God for the expiation of sin. Ritualists may not insist in words upon a change of the elements after consecration into the body and blood of Christ ; but they constantly maintain that, in a supernatural manner, the true body of Christ is present, and hence that the

* The Council of Trent declares, in the commencement of its Second Chapter on the *Sacrifice of the Mass*—"The visible sacrifice on the altar is propitiatory, not only for the living, but also for the dead in Christ, who are not fully cleansed."

† KISS OF PEACE—Rev. Gerald Cobb, p. 105.

‡ "Some Thoughts on Low Masses," by Rev. E. Stewart, p. 31.

highest adoration is to be given to the Saviour actually in the consecrated elements. Because of the ambiguity which attaches to the words *really, truly, substantially**—as applied to designate the presence of Christ in the sacrament, and in their attempt to show that their views are not essentially different from those of the ancients and other formulas of the church, later Ritualistic writers use the term “*Objective*”—to express the manner of Christ’s bodily presence in the sacrament; but there can be no doubt that, by the objective presence, they mean that there is present in the consecrated elements—though in “a supernatural” way, the self-same body in which He suffered, and in which He now sits at the Father’s right hand in glory.

Some of the most eminent Ritualist writers, such as *Dr Pusey* and *Archdeacon Wilberforce*, in his work on the “*HOLY EUCHARIST*,” labour, with all their might to reconcile the idea of Christ’s bodily presence in heaven with His real bodily presence in the sacrament on earth. They appeal to our ignorance of the nature of substance, when pressed with the question, How could our Lord give to His disciples His body, which was circumscribed by place, and which continued to exist a living body in a separate state? It is a sufficient answer to this to say that, if our ignorance of the nature of substance should prevent us from *denying* the presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament, it should equally forbid us to *affirm* the possibility of such a presence. When these writers

* In order to make it every way certain that the body of Christ is corporeally present in the Eucharist, the Church of Rome multiplies terms of definition. It is said to be *vere* (truly), *realiter* (really), and *substantialiter* (substantially) there. Then, these words are still farther defined. By truly, it means not figuratively; by really, it means not efficaciously by faith, and by substantially, it means not simply objectively through the operation and virtue offered by Christ.—See *Den's Theology*, vol. v. p. 279. The scholastic writers explained and applied these epithets in very different and sometimes contrary senses. Thus “*really*” was taken as opposed to “*nominally*”—again to “*figuratively*”—to “*ideally*”—to “*spiritually*”—to “*sacramentally*”—to “*virtually*”—and to “*formally*.¹” The phrase—“*the real presence*,” is an expression too, which has been made to cover the most contradictory doctrines. Most plain persons would conclude that “*the real presence of a body*” means the “*presence of a real body*”—but the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation has rendered many refinements and wire-spun distinctions necessary on this topic. Even Reformers and Protestant writers have both accepted and rejected these technical distinctions, sometimes in the same, but more frequently in different senses—and have thus produced endless confusion in the minds of subsequent writers.—See *Mellor on Priesthood*, p. 239.

refer to the mysterious powers ascribed to Christ's body when on earth, such as His passing through the doors when shut, when the disciples were assembled—His walking on the waters—His coming out of the sepulchre, while yet the stone at the door was not rolled away, it may be replied that the last case referred to shows the palpable ignorance of these writers, as their assertion is expressly contradicted by the Scripture narrative ; and another interpretation may be given to the first case than that which they have assumed. These and other instances mentioned have no proper reference to the subject, which is one of *presence* alone. An organized body must, in the nature of the case, be circumscribed in space, and cannot possibly be in one place and in another at the same time. This several of the Christian Fathers fully perceived and clearly taught. Thus *Augustine* says—“In regard to the presence of His majesty, we have Christ always ; in regard to the presence of His flesh, it was rightly said to the disciples, ‘Me ye have not always ;’ for in regard to the presence of His flesh, the church had Him a few days ; now she has Him by faith, and does not see Him with her eyes.” *Fulgentius* observes —“If the body of Christ be a true one, it must be *centred in a place* ;” and again—“Everything so remains as it has received of God, that it should be—one in this manner, and another on that. *For it is not given to bodies to exist after such a manner as is granted to spirits.*”*

Both Wilberforce in his work on the “EUCHARIST,” and Dr Pusey in his Treatise on “THE REAL PRESENCE,” lay stress on the circumstance that the body of our Lord acquired new properties by its glorification ; and hence, that it could do what would otherwise have been impossible. Yet even admitting this, it may be fully shown that there is not the least evidence from Scripture that the glorified body of the Saviour can be in heaven and in any other place at the same instant of time. Besides, it was certainly not the glorified body of the Redeemer, of which the apostles partook when the Lord's Supper was first observed. The sacrament was then appointed, as it is still, to be the commemoration of a body broken and dead, and not of one glorified. The subterfuge of bringing in the presence of Christ's glorified body in the sacrament is evidently resorted to, in order to support a hopeless case.

* She lived in the sixth century. See Mosheim, Eccl. Hist., p. 226, Note 2. Fulgentius—De fide ad Pet., c. 3.

But, instead of sustaining, it overturns the favourite dogma of the Ritualists. The sacrament, on this ground, would be a sacrificial commemoration of a body which cannot be sacrificed. The body offered by the priest is clearly not identical with that which was given by our Lord to His disciples.

The numerous Directories, Catechisms, and private Prayer-books published by Ritualists, designed for the use of their disciples when attending on the Eucharist, make it completely apparent that they hold, as all-important in the ordinance of the Supper, the real or objective presence of Christ's body and blood; and that the Eucharist is, according to them, a sacrifice offered to God for the expiation of sin. The dresses and postures of the ministrants, which are prescribed with the most minute care, are valued because of their symbolical meaning; and they are viewed as deriving their chief significance from the awful presence of Christ in the sacrament. In these books they speak of the "Elevation of the Host"—a thoroughly Romish expression—and of "adoring the sacred flesh;" and they give special directions for the most profound veneration to be shown at particular parts of the service. Thus, the people are directed to pray for the priest—"May the Lord receive this sacrifice from thy hands, to the praise and glory of His name, for our benefit, and for the benefit of all His church!" When the priest offers the bread and wine on the altar, the people are bid to pray—"Receive, O Eternal Father, this offering, which is now only bread and wine, but will soon, by a miracle of Thy grace, become the true body and blood of Thine only Son; and with this oblation, I desire to offer my most unworthy prayers, that, through the merits of Jesus Christ, I may obtain all the grace I need." Again, it is said, "At the words, 'This is my body—this is my blood,' you must believe that the bread and wine became the real body and blood, with the soul and Godhead of Jesus Christ;—bow down your heart and body in deepest adoration when the priest says these awful words, and worship your Saviour then verily and indeed present on His altar, and say—

"Hail, True Body! born of Mary,
Spotless Virgin's virgin birth."

"When the priest prays before the altar, then pray thus—
'Receive, O holy Father Almighty and Eternal God, this pure oblation which I join with thy priest in offering unto Thee, the

living and true God, *for my sins and for the sins of all the faithful, living and dead.*" "Before the consecration, use this prayer—" May this heavenly sacrifice be unto Thee salvation and life. Let that living Bread, *now about to come down from heaven* to give life to the world, come into my heart, and cleanse me from all impurity of flesh and spirit : may it be the aid and abiding salvation of my soul and body ! " "At the consecration, adore the God and Saviour truly present, and say, Hail ! saving Victim—offered on the true cross for me and for all mankind." "When you get back to your place, use no words of prayer for a minute or two, but kneel with closed eyes, clasped hands, and bended head, with all your mind fixed on the thought that God and man *is within your soul and body.*" It need not be thought strange that, after all this, Ritualists should teach, as a main article of their creed, that salvation is not obtained through faith in the word, but through the Eucharist administered by priests who have had episcopal consecration ; and thall all who do not thus receive it, are to be regarded as either altogether out of the pale of salvation, or are left to the uncovenanted mercies of God.

The whole of these views of Ritualists concerning the Lord's Supper amount to a manifold and gross perversion of this ordinance. Nowhere in Holy Scripture is the Lord's Supper termed a sacrifice ; and it is nowhere represented as a propitiatory offering to put away sin, but always as the commemoration of the perfect atonement of Christ, given for this purpose and never to be repeated. The ministers who dispense the ordinance are never spoken of as priests ; and there is no mention made, in any of the inspired accounts of the institution or observance of the Supper, of an altar on which an expiatory offering is presented ; and of any act of adoration being given to the body and blood of Christ as if present in the elements. To build up the vast theory of the real or corporeal presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament—of it being a true propitiatory sacrifice—and of the oral participation of the body of Christ in the sacrament on the simple words, "This is my body"—cannot but be regarded as most unnatural and preposterous, and as utterly destitute of the least scriptural warrant. It is observable, that while extreme Ritualists, such as Mr Wilberforce and Dr Pusey carefully avoid using the precise Romish terms, transubstantiated or the substance changed, they yet speak in no dubious language of what

amounts to the same thing. They say that while “the species remain, the sensible elements are, at the word of consecration, “converted,” or changed into the actual flesh and blood of Christ. If not by being transubstantiated, these elements by *combination*, that is, by the outward sign being joined to the inward substance, they become one heterogeneous whole.” This cannot but be regarded, as, under a disguised phraseology, the plain teaching either of the Popish doctrine of transubstantiation, or of the Lutheran consubstantiation; though it is easy to see, from the way in which Ritualist writers vehemently denounce the Protestant Reformation in other parts of their writings, that the Romish dogma, and not the Lutheran, meets their approbation. It is, moreover, noteworthy, that the leading Ritualist divines constantly refer for the corroboration of their peculiar views to the early Christian Fathers and to the Council of Trent. They appeal but little to the testimony of the Scriptures, or to the doctrinal formularies of the English Established Church,—the reference, in the former case, being almost exclusively to the words of institution, and in the latter, to various evasions and glosses put upon some of the expressions of the formularies, and upon the supposed objects of the compilers, which, on any candid interpretation, they will not bear.

While it must be admitted that the English reformers, in some of the phraseology which they employed in the Prayer Book, in speaking of the Lord's Supper, have retained words which were likely intended to be suggestive of a certain mysterious presence of Christ in the sacrament, yet it is perfectly plain that they strongly opposed the doctrine of transubstantiation, and of the real corporeal presence in the sacrament; and discarded the tenet that the body of Christ was partaken of by eating with the mouth, and that any sort of adoration is to be offered to the material elements or to the body of Christ in them. Speaking of the grand Romish error, the English reformers say, in brief but comprehensive terms—“Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine, in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.” In the Twenty-eighth Article, as adopted in 1562, it is declared, “The body of Christ is given, taken and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner; and the means whereby the body of Christ is received, and eaten in the

Supper is faith. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not, by Christ's ordinance, reserved, carried about, lifted up and worshipped." In opposition to the Romish doctrine, that unbelievers may eat Christ's body in the Eucharist, it is declared in Article xxix.—"The wicked and such as be void of lively faith although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as St Augustine says) the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet *in no wise are they partakers of Christ*; but rather to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing."

The Rubric, at the close of the communion service, which was introduced, it is believed, through the influence of John Knox,* in the revision of the Book of Common Prayer, under Edward VI., was afterwards left out, but was finally restored on the last revision, after the *Restoration*, disallows any adoration of the consecrated elements by those who kneel on receiving them, and rejects the real corporeal presence of the sacrament. "It is hereby declared that thereby (by kneeling) no adoration is intended, and ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread and wine, there bodily received, or unto any *corporeal presence of Christ's material flesh and blood*. For the sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very material substances, and therefore may not be adored; for that were idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians; or, the material body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here; it is being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one." These strongly expressed Protestant views of the sacrament were held by all the most eminent reformers and divines of the English Church in the early period of its history, and were the grounds of suffering of not a few of the martyrs under the Marian persecution. The Ritualistic perversions are clearly opposed to the doctrine and spirit of the fathers and founders of the English National Church. They are, however, adapted and recommended to the modern taste for a showy and sensuous worship—a thorough revival of Popish error and idolatry in a nominally Protestant Church. It is no wise to be wondered at that *Cardinal Manning*, while condemning some parts of the Puseyite and Ritualistic system, should express, at the same time, his cordial satisfaction with the progress of Ritualism in the English Church, as tending to facilitate the return of the nation

* See Knox and the English Reformation—by Professor Lorimer.

to fellowship with Rome. Nor need it be thought strange, that so many educated persons who had adopted Ritualistic sentiments and doctrines should afterwards find their resting-place in the Romish communion. The proper logical consequence of the reasoning of Wilberforce in his learned work on the Eucharist, is the full, open adoption of the whole Tridentine creeds ;—in his having himself done this, he is certainly more honest and consistent than others of the party, such as Pusey, who still retains the Protestant name, while they do all that is in their power to discredit the distinctive truths of the Protestant faith, and to undermine the creed of the church to which they have sworn adherence, and whose emoluments and honours they enjoy.

CHAPTER XIII.

PERPETUAL OBLIGATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

LIGHTFOOT.—“Baptism and the Lord’s Supper arose with the Gospel, and must endure as long as the economy of the Gospel, because of the affinity between them.”

1 COR. xi. 26.—“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.”

THAT the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper were designed by their glorious Institutor to be of perpetual and universal obligation is generally admitted by such as bear the Christian name; and the almost universal practice of the Christian church since it was first founded, is the clearest exponent of this design. Because, however there is a sect of Christians, in many respects most estimable, who deny the perpetual obligation of those ordinances, and because large numbers in the different Protestant churches, who admit it, yet practically neglect them, it appears needful to state at length the *reasons* of their perpetual obligation. We purposely confine the statement and argument to the sacrament of the Supper, inasmuch as numbers who would not regard themselves as entitled to be called Christians, if they did not bring their children to be baptized, live in the allowed habitual neglect of the Lord’s Supper.

DENIAL OF THE PERPETUAL OBLIGATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER BY THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

The sect of Quakers, or, as they term themselves, the Society of Friends, deny the *perpetual* obligation of the Lord’s Supper, as they do that of baptism; and among the ordinances of public and social worship on which they attend, these sacraments have no place. Not only the founders and early writers of this Society, pointedly objected against the use of these ordinances in the church, and resolutely excluded them, but some of their most distinguished writers in later times—and those who admit in general the supreme authority of Scripture and are evangelical in sentiment, strongly oppose the perpetual obligation

of the Christian sacraments. While we hold in high esteem some of those writers, and cherish loving regard to the Society of Friends, for their consistent testimony against corrupt civil and ecclesiastical systems, their earnest philanthropy, and the Christian temper and spirit which they manifest, we cannot but deeply deplore the doctrinal errors which they hold, in relation to the two chief institutions of Christianity. We must ever regard it as an evil of no common magnitude, to cast out of the worship of the church ordinances which the Saviour, as her illustrious Head and King has so plainly and positively enjoined—the observance of which too was designed so much for the promotion of His glory in the world, and for the benefit and blessing of the church throughout all ages till the end of time. The grounds on which this Body and those writers deny the obligation of the sacrament upon all Christians, we consider as altogether untenable, and the arguments by which they attempt to sustain their views, are, in our judgment, unscriptural and inconclusive. It is painful for us to have to notice such errors. Nothing but a heartfelt concern for the authority of Christ, and for the integrity and purity of institutions which He appointed as a precious heritage for His church, could induce us to expose and condemn them. Our earnest desire and hope are that, through the more exact study of the inspired Word—a fuller admission of its exclusive supreme authority—and above all, by the plentiful effusion of the Spirit, the Friends may be led yet to acknowledge the universal and perpetual obligation of the Christian sacraments.

The avowed doctrinal sentiments of the Society of Friends respecting the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are, when briefly stated—that these ordinances were given by Christ to His apostles, and for them alone—and intended to be observed by them mainly or wholly in a spiritual way. Baptism by water was, even to the apostles, of no use, but as it denoted cleansing by the Spirit, and the bread and wine in the Supper were only of temporary value, as exhibiting and teaching participation by faith of Christ and His saving benefits. The sprinkling of water, and the eating and drinking of the elements in the Supper—whatever use they served to the apostles, were not designed for the members of the church. When the full dispensation of the Spirit is come, these are to be wholly laid aside, as being carnal. All that is now meant by the one ordinance is the purification of the Spirit, and by

the other, the participation by faith of Christ and His benefits,—as the true Bread from heaven—the designed spiritual nourishment of the soul.

BARCLAY, in his "*Apology*"—a work of much authority among the Friends—declares "The breaking of bread by Christ and His disciples was a figure which even they who had received the substance, used in the church for a time for the sake of the weak . . . yet seeing that they (such rites) are but shadows of better things, they cease in such as have obtained the substance." This can only be taken as mere gratuitous assertion—and this not only unsupported by the evidence furnished by the scriptural record, but plainly contradicted by the practice of the Primitive Church. It degrades the ordinance of the Supper into a mere ceremony, which may be used for a time, and then changed, or altogether dispensed with. There is not the slightest hint, either in the original institution, or in the instructions and practice of the apostles afterwards, that it was designed only for "the weak," or to be observed by the strong in the way of forbearance; but, on the contrary, it was provided as strong meat for "such as are of full age, who have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Referring to the Saviour's command—"This do in remembrance of Me," Barclay admits that the expression cannot properly mean the remembrance of the Saviour when He was present on the occasion of the institution of the ordinance, but that it relates to recalling Him to their minds after His separation. He would have it, however, that the command referred to the ordinary meal of Christians, and not to the sacrament of the Supper. "In eating and drinking in their houses, they were to have regard to Him!" The simplest reader of the inspired record can easily see that this is a palpable misapplication of the Saviour's specific command. Barclay is constrained to admit that in the Primitive Church, a particular feast was kept for commemorating Christ's death. To take words which so pointedly refer to this institution, and apply them only to the common meals of Christians, can only be regarded as a manifest perversion.

JOSEPH B. GURNEY, a distinguished author of the same body, regards the Saviour's command as referring exclusively to the Passover, which he thinks the apostles would observe after the crucifixion. He gives what he says "may be deemed

a fair and reasonable interpretation of our Lord's very simple precept"—when he says—"The apostles continued in the practice of parts of the Jewish ritual long after the crucifixion of our Lord ; and although that ritual was in fact abolished by His death, the sudden disuse of it does not appear to have been enjoined upon them by their Divine Master. Having these facts in our view, we may reasonably interpret the words of Jesus as commanding nothing more than that His apostles should call Him to their recollection when they sat together to celebrate the supper of the Passover."* Such an interpretation plainly reduces our Lord's words to an absurdity. The nature and known facts of the case entirely preclude it. The Passover, as a prefigurative ordinance, was abolished by the death of Christ. Its continuance afterwards would have been destitute of any meaning. The apostles could not afterwards have observed it, without returning to the bondage of legalism, and clinging to the Shadow, when the glorious Substance had fully come. The church in Corinth, to whom the apostle wrote, some thirty years after the institution of the Lord's Supper did not certainly observe the Passover ; and yet the apostle employs the very words which Christ used when He appointed the New Testament ordinance. It can hardly be wondered at that Mr Gurney speaks with apparent hesitation and misgiving, in offering this interpretation ;—as when he says—"We may reasonably interpret the words of Jesus as commanding nothing more"—and "it is by *no means very improbable*" that the words mean what he alleges. We think, on the contrary—from the whole known facts of the case, that such an explanation is most *unreasonable*, and that not only *the strong probability*, but the certainty, is altogether against it.

Again, both Barclay and Gurney oppose the universal and perpetual obligation of the sacrament, by alleging that the words—by eating and drinking—"Ye do show the Lord's death till He come," are to be taken as simply *declaring*, and not as *requiring*. "Those," says Barclay, "that understand the difference betwixt a narrative of a thing, and a command, cannot but see, if they will, that there is no command in this place, but only an account of a matter of fact."† This cannot be viewed as less than an unworthy evasion. If the whole

* Gurney's "Observations on the Religious Peculiarities of the Friends," p. 116, 117.

† Apology, p. 416.

service was, as these writers allege, contrary to the nature of evangelical worship, the apostle, instead of giving a true narrative of its appointment, and thus in reality enjoining it, would have shown it to be unauthorized. This would have been the readiest way to put an end to the abuses that prevailed in the Corinthian church. Everything in the apostle's expressions implies that he authoritatively required the due observance of the ordinance ; and by contrasting the right use and design of the material elements, with the carnal feasting of the Corinthians, that he sanctioned the participation of the outward symbols in this ordinance.

Several of the errors of the Society of Friends arise from wrong ideas respecting the inspiration and supreme exclusive authority of the Scriptures. Thus, Mr Gurney, whilst maintaining the reality of supernatural revelation, and ably advocating the doctrines of the Fall—of regeneration, and of justification by faith, represents the apostle as being under a “ strong erroneous impression that the second coming of Christ was at hand.” Although such a statement has been made by others, it is plainly contradicted by what Paul mentions in 2 Thessalonians ii. 1-3, and by various other plain statements in the apostolic writings. To ascribe mistakes and erroneous impressions to the apostles is plainly to set aside their authority in matters of faith and practice, and to charge the Spirit of truth Himself with imperfection and falsehood.”

It deserves to be remarked, that Mr Gurney appears to be somewhat more liberal in his views concerning the doctrine of the Friends on the sacrament than are the earlier writers of the same body. We have heard, however, that he is not considered orthodox on this subject by the stricter members of the Society. While contending for the liberty to disuse the institution of the Supper, in one place, he at least refrains from censuring those who continue to observe it, “ in the simple system of the Primitive Christians,” and he thinks that such “ are not without their warrant in the example of the Primitive Church.” While this concession may be taken as an example of the writer's liberal spirit, it cannot be accepted as a proper view of Christian duty in the matter. No plea of expediency should be allowed to interfere with obedience to a plain Divine command. The stated observance of the Lord's Supper is either an act of required obedience to the command of Christ, or it is will-worship. If the Society of Friends are justified in

neglecting this service, then the great body of Christians have plainly, for upwards of eighteen hundred years, been guilty of will-worship. Believing as we do that the Lord's Supper was appointed by the Head of the Church to be of universal and perpetual obligation, a supreme regard to the authority of sacred Scripture, as well as fervent Christian charity, should impel us to desire that Friends may be led seriously to review this part of their profession, and may be won to the full acknowledgment of the truth.

The perpetual obligation of the Lord's Supper is plainly taught by the Head of the Church.

First, *In the words which He employed in its institution.* In giving to His disciples both the bread and the cup, He solemnly enjoined—"This do in remembrance of me"—or as a *monument or memorial* of Me. Obviously the appointment was not only that the apostles who were present might observe an affecting memorial of their Master, after His departure, as long as they continued on earth, but that the ordinance should ever after be a standing monument reared to the Saviour's name—a memorial of His person, and love, and work, by His followers throughout all succeeding generations. Thus was the institution understood by the apostles, who not only stat-edly observed the Supper themselves, but who also enjoined its observance upon those everywhere who embraced the gospel. Thus, too, did the apostolic churches universally regard the institution established by the authority of their King; and on this ground, and not, as being merely permitted to attend to it, as a voluntary act, did they universally observe it. In the book of Acts, and in the Pauline epistles, we have the distinct record of the celebration of the Lord's Supper by the church at Jerusalem—at Troas—in Corinth; and there is every reason to conclude that it was observed generally by the other primitive churches. These early Christian societies kept up the institution as a duty specially commanded by the Saviour, and as holding forth a visible badge of their holy profession. They clearly understand the institution of the Supper, taught them by the apostles as a standing ordinance of Christ's kingdom, designed to be observed by all His people till the end of time.

Secondly, The full account of the institution given by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians xi. 23-30—writing to the Corinthian church, more than a quarter of a century, after the

ascension of the Redeemer to heaven, and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, bear the strongest evidence to the observance of the Supper up till that time, and of the design that it should be perpetually observed in all time future. Various abuses of the institution had early crept into the church at Corinth; and these had so marred its simplicity, and corrupted its purity, that the great ends of the ordinance were wholly left out of view, and it had degenerated into a carnal feast. As a striking instance of the greatest good being sometimes educed out of what is evil, the apostle was divinely directed to set forth the nature and ends of the institution, and the character and duty of those who observe it, in a fuller and clearer light than these had been presented hitherto—“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread,” etc. The opening phrase plainly implies that the account which he gives of the institution, he had received by special Divine revelation.* When he mentions the elements to be used, and their signification, and enjoins the duties of remembering Christ, and showing forth publicly His death—and especially when He prescribes self-examination as required to the right partaking of the ordinance—all this implies that the ordinance is authoritatively enjoined, and that it was designed to be observed throughout coming ages. If the duty was to cease to be obligatory on the death of the apostles, such directions would be altogether out of place. The instructions of the apostle are to be regarded as a Divine prescription for the due celebration of the Lord's Supper by the church in all ages. There is manifestly nothing local or temporary in the duties enjoined. The ends of the institution—in the highest degree important—are the same in the church in all lands and in all circumstances. The duty of solemn self-trial is always required of those who would worthily partake of the sacramental feast, and enjoy spiritual benefit from it; and the danger of corrupting and perverting it is as great as it was in apostolic times.

The attempts made by writers of the “Society of Friends” to explain the words of institution, as given by the apostle, on the principle of limiting the observance of the ordinance to the apostles—the immediate followers of Christ, are a specimen of the misleading and blinding influence of an erroneous

* See verse 2 of the chapter, and 1 Cor. xv. 3, and Gal. i. 11, 12.

system, in attempting the explanation of some of the plainest passages of Scripture. The remarks of *Dr Doddridge* on this passage are judicious and eminently satisfactory—"The epistle," he says, "seems to have been written before any of the gospels, and it seems to be intimated—*Galatians i. 17*, that when he wrote it, he had seen none of the apostles. It is very remarkable that the institution of this ordinance should make a part of that immediate revelation with which Christ honoured him; and it affords a strong argument for the *perpetuity* of it in the Church. For had other of the apostles (as *Barclay* seems to insinuate) mistaken what occurred at the last Passover, and founded the observance of the Eucharist on that mistake, surely Christ would rather have corrected this error in His *new revelation* to *St Paul*, than have administered such an occasion of confirming Christians in it."*

Thirdly. In the *formula of the institution* of this ordinance, it is declared that those who observe it, show forth the death of Christ *till He come again*.† This phrase, when used without limiting circumstances, undeniably refers to the second coming of the Redeemer at the close of the gospel dispensation, and at the general judgment. Till then, it is plainly taught that all the disciples of Christ, in eating and drinking at the sacramental table—are to make a public profession of belief in the atonement of Christ, and to do this for purposes most important and salutary. The knowledge of the great fundamental facts of Christianity on which the life and hopes of Christians are based, is, in a great measure preserved and diffused by means of the ordinances that are symbolical and instructive. Such ordinances as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are visible monuments of the truth of the gospel. If those are removed out of sight, the knowledge of saving truth will, in a great measure, be lost, and their grand moral purposes cannot be reached. The law of Christ plainly enjoins the moral and perpetual obligation of the Lord's Supper. Professed Christians, therefore, by neglecting it, rebel against the Lord's authority—set themselves in opposition to the example of the primitive Christians; and the obvious tendency of their conduct is, by such neglect, to discredit the great truths of Christianity before the world, and to represent its privileges as of no value.

* *Doddridge—Family Expositor—Note on 1 Corinthians xi. 26.*

† *1 Cor. xi. 26.*

Fourthly. The plea which is sometimes advanced by those who deny the perpetual obligation of the sacraments, that *this is inconsistent with the spirituality of the gospel dispensation*, may be readily shown to be *inapplicable and nugatory*. Though it is admitted that Christianity is spiritual in its nature, this cannot justify the inference that it excludes all symbolical ordinances, and shuts out whatever is material in their observance. The Jewish ordinances were carnal and earthly—adapted to the infant state of the church, and typical of good things to come. While the former economy continued, the use of symbols was not wrong, when their spiritual import was duly regarded. The sin lay in resting wholly on things carnal and tangible, to the overlooking and undervaluing of what was spiritual. The ancient types were shadows of gospel realities; and have vanished away, when the substance is come. The symbols or types of the new dispensation are founded on facts, and on clearly revealed doctrines, and are designed to illustrate and not darken Divine truths. The spirituality of religion is, in no wise, inconsistent with external forms, though it is, in some measure, independent of them. The human person is composed of body and spirit. The ordinances of the gospel are adapted to both parts of men's nature; and full provision is made for bringing the redeemed to the stature of perfect men in Christ. The body is the Lord's, as well as the soul; and believers are required, "by the mercies of God," to give their bodies "as a living sacrifice"—and to "yield themselves to the Lord, and their bodies as instruments unto righteousness."* Those who object against the use of aught that is figurative or symbolical in religious ordinances, are bound, if they would be consistent, to go farther, and to reject all that is external or material in religious services. They should exclude preaching and hearing—any bodily position in worship, and even the expression of prayer and praise in audible words. By the exclusion of the outward means by which spirituality is usually promoted, it may be easily shown that neither the *spiritual character* of Christianity is established, nor the spirituality of those who profess it is promoted. It is judiciously observed—"If a religion consisting of mere outward forms and external ordinances, would be unworthy of God, a religion entirely stripped of them would be unsuitable to man. A system wholly carnal would suit beings consisting

* Rom. xii. 1; vi. 13.

of flesh without spirit: a system entirely spiritual would suit beings composed of spirit without matter. Constituted as we are, that we may be fully and properly influenced, we must be furnished with a system adapted to both parts of our nature.* In the Scriptures, *spiritual* is opposed to what is *carnal*, *worldly*, and *sinful*, and not to what is *material*, and *visible*, and *tangible*. Means are properly designated spiritual, which promote spiritual views, and excite spiritual feelings. In the believer's state of grace here, as the body has a powerful influence on the mind, things material, presented by God, are fitted to promote true spirituality, and to conduct believers to full perfection. Even in the heavenly state, when the risen bodies of saints shall be fully fashioned like Christ's glorious body, we have all reason to think that through bodily as well as mental sensations, the redeemed will serve God in the celestial worship, and will thus see and enjoy Him for ever. "Christianity," it has been well observed, "divested of all forms and ordinances, would be reduced to a system of quietism, uncongenial with the nature of man, and destitute of all claim to an analogy with the other arrangements of God. It would not then be a *spiritual religion*, but a *religion of spirits*; and would soon be left to wander through the world like a spectral phantom, unheeded and unknown. As the body without the spirit is dead, so the spirit without the body is viewless and inoperative."†

Having thus shown that the observance of the sacrament of the Supper is perpetually obligatory, it concerns us briefly to notice *on whom* the obligation rests. We should make the inquiry seriously, and with personal application to ourselves, lest we be found neglecting a divine ordinance, and thus incur the guilt of disregarding what the highest authority enjoins, and of withdrawing from an ordained means of the highest blessing.

WHO ARE UNDER OBLIGATION TO OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

First. The obligation to celebrate the Lord's Supper lies upon *all Christians* who are in circumstances to attend to it. It can never be held optional to observe it, or abstain from it

* Orme—"The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper Illustrated," p. 207.

† Orme on the Lord's Supper, p. 212.

at pleasure. Whenever it is thus regarded, and an irregular and desultory observance is substituted for that which is solemn and stated. The authority of Him who instituted the feast is practically set at nought, and the blessings which He has connected with it are undervalued. The will of Christ is as clearly made known in relation to the sacrament of the Supper, as in reference to any other commandment which He has given, or institution that He has appointed. He enjoins His people to "do this in remembrance of me," as plainly and pointedly as He commands—"Thou shalt have no other God before me"—or "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." In no case may we plead exemption from a duty which the Redeemer enjoins. "He that offends in one point is guilty of all,"—since by neglect of one, he contemns the authority which prescribes the whole law, and violates the principle of all right obedience. The Lord's Supper was designed, among other ends of its institution, to be a public badge of a Christian profession. By neglecting it, a person is destitute of the evidence of being a genuine disciple of Christ, and virtually proclaims to others that he is unwilling to be known as one of His servants, and that he has no desire after the privileges of His house.

Secondly. A special obligation rests on Christians to observe this ordinance *from the time and circumstances in which it was appointed.* The apostle Paul, when recording the institution of the Lord's Supper, relates, with special emphasis, that it was ordained—"On the same night in which He was betrayed."* What depth of spiritual meaning—what amazing condescension and love are expressed in these few words ! On the eve of His great agony—when He was about to accomplish fully the grand mission of His love, for which He came into the world—when He was going forth to the conflict with the evil powers of earth and hell—when He was on the point of surrendering His precious life, as a voluntary offering for the sins of His people—in this momentous crisis of the Saviour's sufferings, and of His people's redemption, He instituted this ordinance for the purpose of being a perpetual memorial of His atoning death, and the assured pledge of His unchangeable friendship and love to His people. The command to keep the Feast, and show forth His death, was the Saviour's last and loving command, spoken before He entered the scene

* 1 Cor. xi. 24.

of embittered sufferings.* The command is addressed to every one who bears His name, and professes to expect salvation through His blood, as the parting injunction of a dying Friend and Benefactor. How is it possible that any who are friends of Christ—to whom He is precious—can, by not observing the ordinance, be heedless of the call of duty, and unmindful of the obligations of love? If we have ever felt the claims of the Saviour's love—or been affected aright by the thrilling incidents that marked the night in which He was betrayed, we cannot but eagerly desire to evince our appreciation of His person and work by taking part in the commemoration.

Thirdly. A proper regard to *Christ's honour* and to *a Christian profession in the world*, will constrain us to the observance of the Lord's Supper. In no other ordinance of our holy religion is there made so full a display of the glory of the Redeemer, as Immanuel, God with us—the Prophet, Priest and King in the covenant—the Husband and Head of His church—the Source and last End of all blessing and blessedness. Herein is manifested, in the most affecting aspect, His amazing condescension and His glorious perfections. He bows the heavens and comes down. Zion's King comes meek and having salvation. He gathers around Him, to share in the rich gifts of His grace and love, the poor and the needy—the despised of the earth, and those who are guilty and rebellious—polluted wanderers and backsliders. In the symbolical representation made in the ordinance, Divine perfections are displayed in their lustre and harmony—combined in the great work of human redemption. In the fellowship which the Redeemer has with His people in this ordinance, these perfections are seen in the most attractive and endearing manifestations. “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”† “Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacri-

* As spoken to us enjoining the observance of the Sacramental Feast, it is to be viewed as the great command of His love, expressive of earnest desire on His part, and designd to draw forth the love of our hearts towards Him. He is jealous of a sole interest in the esteem and affection of our hearts. In the tenderest and most moving manner, He appeals to our love—and He requires this evidence at all times—“if ye love Me, keep My commandments”—so in no other ordinance, are we presented with more affecting and constraining motives to ready obedience.

† Ps. lxxxv. 10.

fice. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness ; for God is judge Himself.* If we would behold the beauty of the Lord, and be instrumental in promoting His glory, we will attend upon the ordinance which He has appointed as a principal means of revealing His grace and truth, and as an eminent way of spreading His renowned fame. The honour of a Christian profession is thus too, brightly displayed. In the sacramental feast, the church appears as an enclosed garden, full of pleasant plants, and its spices, through the quickening gales of the Spirit, flowing forth. Saints come and worship there in "the beauty of holiness"—and as they are led to the banqueting house, the "Banner of love" is lifted up among them, and waves around them.

Fourthly, Our own best interests for time and eternity—the welfare of fellow-Christians—and our duty to the world, oblige us to the diligent observance of the Lord's Supper. In keeping God's "commandments," there is a great present as well as future "reward." Practical obedience to no Divine commandment brings with it greater blessing than the outward participation of the sacramental supper. It tends to lift the mind above the things of the world, and to raise the affections to things above. It brings near the great truths of the costly scheme of human redemption, and the awful realities of eternity. The exercises of meditation, self-examination, and personal covenanting, which are connected with the observance of the ordinance are of great importance in determining the character, inducing a sense of personal responsibility, and leading to serious and stedfast views of the great end of life. The close and loving fellowship into which one is brought with the people of God, to share their sorrows and joys, and to experience their sympathies and prayers, is of unspeakable advantage, alike to the young, entering on a religious course, and to the Christian pilgrim at any future stage. His public appearance with the sacramental host is to him of no little benefit, as it openly proclaims that, having become separate from the world, he is on the Lord's side ; as it furnishes one of the strongest motives to resist temptations to lukewarmness and apostacy, and to perseverance and holy devotedness. We owe it to fellow-Christians to exhibit our warm love toward them as children of the same family—living members of the same mystical body, by uniting with them in the communion

* Ps. l. 5, 6.

of the Saviour's death. Thus we openly attest that we regard it as an honour to be one with them, however low they are in the world, and however despised by the ignorant and ungodly. Like our adorable Master, we are called to show that we desire to eat the feast with fellow-disciples—that we may ourselves acquire renewed strength for future afflictions and conflicts, and that we may associate and encourage them in trials and sufferings. In coming to the sacramental feast, we say to the Lord—"Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight."* We declare at the same time before the world—"All we are brethren." As we retire from the ordinance, we are often made to rejoice that the love of the brethren is drawn forth and increased—that we ourselves are strengthened for trial and conflict; and that we have in any measure helped fellow-travellers on their heavenward journey. By our intercourse with them, we have lightened their burdens, and made them to go on their way rejoicing.

The Lord's Supper is an appointed means for preserving the knowledge of Christ and His death in the world. The public institutions of religion are given for the spiritual illumination of those who are in darkness, and for rescuing men from the way of destruction. Even when divine revelation is enjoyed, and the light of the gospel shines, vast multitudes are held under the power of darkness. The whole world lieth in wickedness. The god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not, and the gospel, in its saving power and transforming influence, is hid to them that are lost. If it is thus with great numbers, who have access to the word preached, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, how much worse would it be, if these precious ordinances were wholly withdrawn? The knowledge of God, and of the way of life and salvation, would cease, and men left to the counsels of their own hearts, and under the power of the Evil One, would live without God, and perish without hope. The habitual practical neglect of the Lord's Supper tends greatly to encourage men in spiritual ignorance and in a course of ungodliness. It virtually proclaims that the great fundamental truths which the ordinance exhibits concerning the covenant of grace, and the person and work of the Saviour are of no importance, and that men may disregard the claims of the

* Ps. xvi. 2, 3.

gospel, and die in safety. To the world around, as Christians we owe at all times an open and full confession of Christ and His truth—and this illustrated and confirmed by the graces of the renewed character, and by a conversation becoming the gospel. As being ourselves spiritually enlightened, we should let our light shine before men, that they, beholding our good works, should glorify our Father who is in heaven.* There is no other way in which this confession can be more impressively made, and in which the light of Christian character can be more attractively displayed, than by the devout observance of the sacramental feast. If this is neglected or irregularly attended to, how can the world do otherwise than regard our profession of Christ as equivocal or doubtful? Our conduct is calculated to throw a stumbling-block before the world; and the blame of their prejudice against religion, and their ungodliness, may be justly reckoned as ours. On the other hand, by the devout observance of the Lord's Supper, a Christian may largely advance the good of society, while he promotes his own best interests. As Christians, we are bound to feel that "no man liveth to himself, or dieth to himself," and that we are debtors to all to make known to them saving truth, and to promote their spiritual benefit. Our obligations are weighty and manifold to "do good to all men as we have opportunity." Our stedfast purpose carried out to obey all Christ's commands—and especially His last loving command, in commemorating and showing forth His death, may affect for good many others. It will make His "name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the people praise Him for ever and ever."[†] Thus do we impressively declare to others—"None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."[‡]

* Matt. v. 16.

† Ps. xlv. 17.

‡ Rom. xiv. 7, 8.



P A R T I I.

CHAPTER I.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER—PERSONS WHO ADMINISTER IT—MODE—TIMES.

THE Lord's Supper was instituted by the Head of the church, to be dispensed—as a standing public memorial of His death, to its believing members throughout all succeeding generations. That it should be administered in due order, according to divine prescription, is apparent from various considerations. God is the God of order, and not of confusion, in all the churches. Our Lord, when He fed miraculously the multitudes that waited on His ministry, and blessed the provision, committed the distribution of the bread into the hands of His chosen disciples. At the first observance of the sacramental feast, when He was personally present, none but the eleven apostles were with Him; but the nature of the institution, and the instructions which He gave on the occasion, make it apparent that the ordinance was not designed for them alone, or for the future ministers of the church only, but also for all who should believe in Him through their word; and that its dispensation was entrusted to the appointed ministers of the gospel, and to those who were, by His designation, to exercise government and rule in the church. That these only were empowered to dispense the communion of the Supper is evident from the great commission (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). Those to whom it was given by the Risen Saviour were enjoined to "teach all things whatsoever He had commanded," implying plainly that they were to inculcate the observance of all the ordinances which He had instituted, as well as to enforce His precepts; and while doing this, they were, at the same time, to dispense the seals of the covenant. That the commission was not to be limited to the apostles, but to extend to all the future

ministry of the gospel, is plain from the assured promise annexed—"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." That the same rule of administration existed in the primitive Christian churches, founded by inspired men, is clearly shown in the book of Acts, and in the apostolic epistles. Throughout the whole of these inspired records, there does not occur a single instance in which the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is dispensed, save only the authorized teachers and rulers, and in connection with the preaching of the word. Immediately after the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, it is recorded of the church in Jerusalem, that they "continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine, and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."^{*} This passage evidently contains an enumeration of public ordinances that are observed in the infant church; and it being generally admitted that "*the breaking of bread*" means the Lord's Supper, then it is plain that this was observed in connexion with the other ordinances which were dispensed by the ministers of the word. At a subsequent period,[†] it is related that at Troas, "upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them." The narrative is instructive and noteworthy. Though Paul was hastening on to Jerusalem, it is said previously that "*he tarried seven days.*" He waited—engaged most probably in more private labours, till the whole church in Troas should be met in public assembly; and then, when the principal object was to "break bread," he preached and dispensed the ordinance of the Supper. The obvious inference is, that the administration of the Supper was by those who were appointed to conduct the public teaching and worship of the church; and that, on this occasion, this duty was gladly assigned to one so distinguished as was the apostle Paul in the highest office of the ministry, and who was so richly endowed with the manifold gifts and graces of the Spirit.

In the notable passage—*1 Corinthians xi. 20-23*—the terms employed by the apostle plainly imply that the practice in the church in Corinth, respecting the celebration of the Supper, was similar to that at Jerusalem and Troas; and that the ordinance was administered, in connection with other public institutions, by those who were qualified and appointed to dispense them. The phrases, "Come together in the church"—

* *Acts ii. 42.*

† *Acts xx. 7.*

"coming to one place," are used with reference to public assemblies for worship, and to the special design of eating the Lord's Supper. The first object of the apostle was to correct gross abuses of this ordinance, which had early crept into the Corinthian church. He plainly shows the members that they did not keep the feast in a proper manner—as a united spiritual community—but in parties, and with a wrong spirit, and with various excesses and corruptions. Thus, in this reproof, and in the apostle's subsequent instructions, it is clearly implied that the Lord's Supper was dispensed, in connection with the regular practice of assembling for worship on the Lord's-day, and by those to whom is entrusted the administration of the word, discipline, and the sacraments of the church.

The testimony of Christian antiquity is express and uniform—in showing that the sacrament of the Supper was frequently observed in the early Christian churches, and that it was always dispensed by those who presided in the assemblies for worship, and who expounded the word, and by those who were associated with them in the distribution of the sacred elements. We have accounts of the mode of observance of this ordinance in ancient times by *Pliny*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, and others; and these concur in attesting that the order was the same throughout the primitive churches. That given by *JUSTIN MARTYR*, as the usage of the church in Rome about the middle of the second century, may be taken as a just representation of the universal practice throughout the church in the early age of Christianity :—"There is brought," says he, "to that one of the brethren who is president, a cup of wine, mixed with water. And he, having received them, gave praise and glory to the Father for all these things. And when he has finished his praises and thanksgivings, all the people who are present express their assent, saying, *Amen*, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies—'so be it.' The president having given thanks, and the people having expressed their assent, those who are called deacons give to each of those who are present a portion of the bread, which has been blessed, and of the wine mixed with water; and carry away some for those who are absent. And this food is called by us the Eucharist, of which no one may partake unless he believes that which we teach is true, and is baptized . . . and lives in such a manner as Christ commanded. For we receive not these elements as common bread or common drink. But even as

Jesus Christ, our Saviour . . . had both flesh and blood for our salvation, even so we are taught that the food which is blessed . . . by the digestion of which our blood and flesh are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called gospels, have related that Jesus thus commanded them—that having taken bread and given thanks, He said—‘Do this in remembrance of Me—this is my body;’ and in like manner having taken the cup and given thanks, He said—‘This is my blood;’ and He distributed them to these alone.”

The administration of the sacrament of the Supper by the ordinary ministers and elders of the church, stand markedly opposed to the sentiment and practice of a party in the Protestant Episcopal Church in these countries, on the one hand, and to the practice of certain modern Sectaries on the other. It is maintained by the Tractarian party, and some others, that the sacraments can only rightly be administered by those who have received ordination from the hands of a bishop,—and that salvation is not obtained through faith in the divine word, but solely by participation in the body and blood of Christ, as exhibited in the sacrament. “All others of the Christian name, who do not thus receive the sacraments, have no clear ground to hope for salvation, but are left to the ‘*uncovenanted mercies of God.*’” The grand error and delusion taught here is in assuming that diocesan bishops, who are unknown to the inspired records of the New Testament and to the Christian church of the first *three centuries*, are the true successors of the apostles—that presbyters are of a lower rank in the ministry than bishops—and that, in the primitive church, the dispensation of the Supper was only by bishops, and not by the presbyters. None of these assumptions is susceptible of any satisfactory proof, either from Scripture, or from the records of Christian antiquity. To represent salvation as attainable only through the use of the sacraments, dispensed by those who have been episcopally ordained, and to set aside justification by faith in the word, is, moreover, to introduce two of the most dangerous and destructive errors of Rome—that of regarding the sacrament as an atoning sacrifice, instead of the memorial of Christ’s death—and of setting forth the real material presence of Christ in the ordinance, instead of the Saviour’s spiritual presence, as apprehended by faith. Such

views are plainly destitute of all support from the word of God, as they are diametrically opposed to the doctrines taught in the Standards of the Reformed Churches.

Secondly. By some classes of schismatics and modern sectaries, it is held that the sacrament of the Supper should be dispensed by private persons, whom they called Brethren, and that there is no authority from the word of God to confine its administration to the ministers of the gospel, and to those who are associated with them in rule in the church. Plymouthists especially, who reject the ministry of the Word as *man-made*, and contend that all Christians are officers called by the Spirit, and so have the right to dispense all ordinances, administer the sacrament of the Supper to one another in their assemblies, and even females among them so dispense it publicly. How utterly opposed this is to the command of Christ, and to the practice of the apostolic church, need not be declared. It sets aside all scriptural order—opens a wide door for the admission of ignorant and scandalous persons to sealing ordinances—countenances departure from, and leads to rejection of doctrinal truth, and must be productive of manifold disorder and confusion.

CHAPTER II.

PREPARATION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

ARRANGEMENTS for the actual administration of the sacrament of the Supper, in relation to the *time* and *mode* are to be made by the minister and other ecclesiastical officers of the congregation, so as to conduce to the edification and comfort of the people. It devolves upon them as spiritual watchmen—solemnly responsible to the glorious Head of the church, for promoting His honour in all things, and for advancing the purity and prosperity of the church—to provide that this ordinance be preserved from all corruption, and that it be administered in full accordance with divine prescription, and so as to subserve the great ends of its institution.

Of that preparation for dispensing the Lord's Supper which it is incumbent on ministers and elders to make, the following particulars may be noticed :—

First, All care should be taken that the “ ignorant and scandalous,” and those who are otherwise unworthy, should not be admitted to partake of the sacrament. From the nature of the Feast—it being provided only for the friends of Christ, for confirming the faith of believers, and ratifying to them the acceptance of covenant blessings, it is plain that those who are ignorant of the grand fundamental truths of the gospel, and of the nature and ends of the Lord's Supper, are unfit to receive it. To admit such can only be fraught with evil, alike to them, and to those who set open for them the door of church fellowship. To profane sacred ordinances by administering them to all classes of persons, and without taking pains to discriminate character, is to set at naught the authority of Christ—to lower the standard of Christian profession, and to countenance a fearful delusion in those who claim the children's bread, without a due regard to the possession of the character and spirit of children. The responsibility of ministers and elders to guard the Lord's table against all profanation is great in proportion to the glory of the Master of the feast, shown in pro-

viding it—the high privileges conferred upon His people in its participation,—and the criminality of such as use the ordinance in a carnal manner. While ministers should encourage to come to the Feast those for whom the King has provided it—the guests whom He specially invites—they are fearfully guilty, if they prostitute a sacred ordinance by freely administering it to those whom He excludes—to such as give clear evidence that they love not His name, obey not His laws, and have no real desire for fellowship with His people.

Prior to the administration of the Lord's Supper, all care should be taken to give full and clear instructions concerning its institution, nature, and ends, and the character and qualifications of those who are to be admitted to its participation. There is no little danger in our day—in a time of formal and easy profession—with Bibles in plenty, and even under evangelical teaching, that members are encouraged to come without due preparation to sealing ordinances. It is too readily taken for granted, that persons born in connexion with the visible church are acquainted with the nature, ends and obligations of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, when yet their knowledge is superficial, and even when they may be profoundly ignorant on these important subjects. The seals of the covenant, to be rightly understood and duly observed, involve a knowledge of the great fundamental truths of the scheme of human redemption—of the covenant of works and man's fallen condition—of the mystery of the Trinity—the purpose and plan of the covenant of grace—the Person, Mediatorial offices, and work of the Redeemer—the office of the Holy Spirit—and the way of a sinner's pardon and acceptance with God. Destitute of some measure of scriptural knowledge of these important truths, and especially of an experimental acquaintance with them in the heart and life, those who come to the sacrament cannot “discern the Lord's body”—can receive from it no spiritual benefit, and will only “eat and drink condemnation to themselves.”

Scriptural instruction, preparatory to the administration of the Lord's Supper should be given—First—To the *youth of the church*, and to *inquirers after her fellowship*. A course of careful catechizing and training is indispensable if the young are to be guided into the way of truth and holiness, from which when old they will not depart.* Israelitish parents were en-

* Prov. xxii. 6.

joined, when their children would enquire, what was meant by "the service" of the Passover, to instruct them carefully concerning the appointment, design and spiritual import of the institution. It is surely of much greater importance that Christian parents and ministers should teach the young of their charge the duty of early recognizing their baptismal covenant, by making a public personal profession of religion, and the nature and ends of the death of Christ which they are required to commemorate. Instructions given to the young and to inquirers should be clear, systematic and full—and should be always given, with pointed application to the heart and conscience. A hasty superficial course of instruction is to be avoided, as tending to foster self-conceit, and to encourage self-delusion and presumption. In the Lutheran Churches on the Continent, it is said to be the practice of the clergymen to meet weekly with the young who are looking forward to their first communion, for a whole year or more, for special instruction. Whether a similar course of training is in all cases practicable in those countries, it is certainly required that ministers should see that the baptized youth of the church entrusted to his care, should be taught the great truths that are inseparably connected with the observance of the sacramental feast, and the nature and profession which, in coming to it, they are required to make. Whatever help may be obtained from Catechisms or Manuals which are specially prepared for the young, in relation to the Lord's Supper, our Westminster Confession and Catechisms will be found the fullest and clearest directory for scriptural instruction on this subject. Selections from these, with Scripture proofs and illustrations, will form the best basis of the teaching preparatory to the communion. Conjoined with this should be instructions on the history, profession, and scriptural attainments of the church, and her distinctive testimony as separate from the world, and from the errors and corruptions that mar her fellowship, and obstruct the end of her organization.

Secondly, Congregations, when called to partake of the Lord's Supper, should be publicly instructed respecting the nature and ends of the ordinance, and the character and qualifications of those who are entitled to partake of it, in discourses adapted to the occasion. The covenant of grace, of which the sacrament is a seal—the person, offices, and atoning death of the Redeemer—His finished righteousness as the ground of the sinner's pardon and acceptance—the mission and work of

the Spirit—and the fellowship of the church, are subjects for instruction fitted for preparation for the administration of the Lord's Supper. A competent knowledge of the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel system is certainly required towards the *discernment of the Lord's body*, without which the communicant only incurs divine displeasure and rejection. Expository discourses are, on various accounts, best adapted to convey scriptural instruction on this subject to those who wait on the ministry of the word. The narratives of the different evangelists respecting the closing period of our Lord's personal ministry—including His celebration of the Passover with His disciples—the institution of the Supper—His agony in the garden—crucifixion, resurrection—and His intercourse with His disciples till His ascension, supply frequent themes of discourse for enlightening and impressing the minds of professors in the view of commemorating and showing forth the Saviour's death. And when the types of the Old Testament are expounded, by showing their substance in the Antitype, and ancient prophecy is seen fulfilled in the person and character, sufferings and glory of Christ; and the devotional parts of the Bible, as the Psalms and the Song of Solomon are applied to Christ and the experience of His people—such teaching, under the blessing of the Spirit, will not only serve to lead persons of different capacities, and diversified spiritual attainments to a thoughtful observance of the ordinance, but also to excite in them a suitable frame of heart, for partaking of this high privilege. Ministers should ever aim at maintaining among their people a high standard of intelligent piety, for in proportion as they are thus distinguished, will they display the honour of the Christian profession and glorify Christ, by advancing His cause in the world.

CHAPTER III.

NECESSITY OF SPECIAL PASTORAL TRAINING, AND OF FAITHFUL OVERSIGHT AND DISCIPLINE IN PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER.

I.—SPECIAL PASTORAL TRAINING.

THERE is a strong tendency observable in the church in the present day to overlook the necessity of any special training as a preparation for partaking of the Lord's Supper. When a Christian profession is generally made, and children, dedicated to God by baptism in infancy, are under the care of parents who are members of the church, and the means of grace, public, social, and domestic, are accessible, it is generally taken for granted that the young brought up with such surroundings may, with little or no special instructions, be admitted to sealing ordinances. Other applicants for church fellowship, who have attended on the preaching of the Word and other public ordinances—if their deportment is not palpably opposed to the precepts of the gospel, are readily accredited with fitness to receive the sacramental feast. Ministers and other office-bearers of the church are prone to consider such means adequate for all the preparation that is needed; and to excuse themselves, on the ground of other engagements, from bestowing any farther pains on the preparation of candidates for church fellowship, or for admission to the Lord's Supper. There can be few mistakes greater than this, and few neglects of pastoral work are followed by more injurious and fatal consequences. Besides other important functions of the Christian ministry, a chief part of the pastoral care is the preparation of the flock for the performance of solemn duty, and for the enjoyment of high privilege; and to lead them aright to the fat pastures of the land, and to the mount of holy communion, must ever be considered one of the highest honours put by the Chief Shepherd upon His servants. This duty devolves evidently upon ministers of the gospel, as pastors in the church; but it lies likewise upon elders, who have the solemn charge to feed the flock of Christ,

purchased with His blood, over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers.

The necessity of special pastoral training in order to participation in this ordinance may be seen in various aspects. The proper observance of the sacrament of the Supper is of great importance—whether we regard the glory of Christ, the special good of those who are called to partake of it, or the edification and prosperity of the church. If pastoral training is neglected, and all sorts of persons indiscriminately admitted, this is calculated to foster self-deception, lull men in security, lower the church's profession, and confirm the world in ignorance and ungodliness. The remark has sometimes been made by those who have had large pastoral experience, that if young persons, on entering the membership of the church, and in coming to their first communion, are not seriously impressed with a sense of religion, there is a strong probability that they will not afterwards be so, but are in danger of being found formalists or hypocrites. Whatever truth there may be in this observation, it cannot be questioned that careful pastoral training, as a preparation for admission to the Lord's table, is of paramount importance, and that ministers are to be held responsible for conducting or neglecting it.

The pastoral training of the young, and of other candidates preparatory to the communion, consists in

1. Careful systematic instructions in the doctrines and principles of religion. The parental relation, and the vows of parents at baptism on behalf of their offspring, equally bind them to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The whole church, in receiving into fellowship its infant members, comes under a virtual and solemn engagement to contribute active assistance in promoting the great ends of the baptismal covenant—in educating the young for God and for heaven. The command is addressed to ministers as well as to parents—"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."* The baptized youth of the church should ever be special objects of the minister's care. His interest in the welfare and comfort of the parents, in the blessing of families, and through them, in the spiritual growth and prosperity of the church; and, above all, his supreme love to Christ, should lead him to give the church evidence of it in feeding, directing, and nourishing the lambs of the flock. A

* Prov. xxii. 6.

competent knowledge of revealed truth is indispensable to a right Christian profession, and to the proper enjoyment of church privileges. That “the soul be without knowledge”—whether intellectual or moral—“it is not good ;” and especially the want of the knowledge of the way of salvation must be held as disqualifying for the enjoyment of spiritual privilege. The ignorant, equally with the scandalous, are certainly unfit for partaking of sealing ordinances, and incapable of discerning the Lord’s body ; if admitted in this state, they can only “eat and drink judgment to themselves.” Pastoral training of the young, and of others for participation in the Lord’s Supper, requires that they should be instructed in the truths of Divine revelation, and especially of the scheme of redemption—in the fundamental principles of the Mediatorial government—and in the nature, duties, and privileges of a Christian profession. Instructions on these subjects should be given plainly and systematically, adapted to the capacities of those to whom they are addressed; and they should be imparted in an affecting, loving manner, and with a constant regard to their influence in a godly practice. Pastoral teaching should aim to supply the deficiency of parental instruction ; and even when this has been faithfully given, that of the pastor is supplementary, and designed to proceed beyond first principles to an enlarged acquaintance with the scheme of divine revelation. The Holy Scriptures themselves must ever form the basis of all religious instruction. Besides these, our Westminster Confession and Catechisms will be found of invaluable use in pastoral training. Some help in imparting instruction to candidates for admission to the Lord’s Supper may be obtained from some of the numerous Catechisms and Directories which have been prepared for the use of such persons ; but it is generally better to draw instructions from the Scriptures themselves, and to aim to have those who come to this ordinance, from an early period acquainted with the Scriptures, “which are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”* The Holy Spirit alone can enlighten the understanding, and open the heart to receive saving truth. His gracious influence is equally needed by those who teach and by those who are taught. We should honour the Spirit, by seeking His presence and spiritual illumination. We should resign ourselves wholly to His instruction and guidance. He can enlarge the mind, to enable to

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.

apprehend the things of salvation. Zion's children are all taught of the Lord. The task of instructing becomes easy and pleasant when the Spirit enlightens the mind, and when His gracious presence, sought in prayer, is realized. Pastoral training will be productive of mutual benefits—alike to those who earnestly engage in imparting it, and to those who receive it. Systematic teaching, through the presence and blessing of the Spirit, gives spiritual light to the mind, and elevates and transforms the heart and life.

2. Pastoral training teaches *the nature and obligations of baptismal vows.* A due recognition of baptismal dedication is among the first indications that a good work has commenced in the young. Pastors have, in the baptismal covenant, the best ground for communicating religious knowledge: this too supplies the strongest motives for inquiry, decision in religion, and inculcating the duties of practical godliness. To be admitted in infancy to the seal of the covenant, to have the name of a Three-One God named upon us, to be publicly dedicated to each of the persons of the glorious Godhead, and to be called to the fellowship of the gospel—these are privileges of no ordinary kind; and their possession, when duly considered, obliges to a uniform course of holy devotedness. The ordinance in which “Christ and His benefits are represented, sealed, and applied” to us, implies an explicit engagement on our part to be the Lord’s. Pastors, by referring to the baptismal vow, have the most suitable means for conveying impressive instructions on the great truths of religion. In the symbols and sacramental actions are held forth the grand fundamental doctrines of the Divine Word. The guilt and defilement of our fallen condition, the necessity of spiritual cleansing, and the blessed medium of spiritual purification provided in the blood of Christ; the application of this blood by the Spirit, with the saving benefits thus conferred in regeneration, justification, and sanctification—these great doctrines, properly inculcated, present the truths, by which the Holy Spirit quickens, renews, and sanctifies the soul. When they are carefully taught, it is the natural inference to require such as are baptized to confess publicly their engagement to be the Lord’s, and to seal their confession, by coming to the sacramental table. Faithful pastors cannot fail to make baptism the basis of religious instruction and training. And, in explicitly referring to it, and carefully explaining it, they take the best means of

showing the young and others the necessity of owning their early dedication, and the privilege of doing this by coming to the Lord's Supper. The sacrament of initiation in the covenant, when rightly understood, requires those who obtained it to come to an ordinance which is confessional, and which implies nourishment in the covenant, and, at the same time, the fullest self-surrender and consecration to the service of God.

3. Again, pastoral training of candidates should embrace the duty of *making a public profession of religion, and all that it implies*. The young should be early taught the necessity of separation from the world lying in wickedness, and of joining themselves to the Lord. They must confess Christ openly, and let their light so shine before men, that they, seeing their good works may glorify their father in heaven. A public profession of religion implies an avowed willingness to be on the Lord's side, to confess His truth, to be identified with His servants, to labour for the promotion of His glory in the world, to avoid all known sin, and to maintain constantly a becoming Christian character and deportment. This profession should ever be made in a manner explicit, and with the utmost solemnity.* The company that stand on Mount Zion have the Father's name inscribed on their foreheads, and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. The language of those who make a true profession of religion is, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God;" "All the commandments of my God, I purpose to obey;" "Lord, I am thine—O save me, I have sought Thy precepts;" "One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall name himself with the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel."† Such an open and full profession is to be made willingly, deliberately, and with desire and purpose of heart. This can only be done in the strength of promised grace; and as it should be held fast to the end, those who are required to confess Christ before men should be taught the evil of lukewarmness and backsliding, and the danger of apostasy. A true profession, steadfastly maintained, glorifies God, and is eminently beneficial to men.

* The original term, several times employed in the Scriptures, which is rendered to *confess* or *profess*—*εξομολογεω*—denotes to confess with an oath, implying that an approved religious profession must be one ratified by oath, in other words, a *covenanted* profession.

† Ps. cxix. 94; Isa. liv. 5.

Before persons are brought to a service, which is itself the most solemn and explicit act of a religious profession, and a chief way of confirming it, they should be made fully acquainted with its nature and duties, and withal instructed in the scriptural way of making it, and in its consequences.

4. Furthermore, instructions in regard to *the duties involved in coming to the Lord's table*, and *the fruits to be brought forth in after life*, must form an essential part of all right pastoral training for the service. Candidates should be taught what it is to commemorate the Saviour's death, and to show it forth to others —what is the communion with God, and with fellow-saints to which they are called—the solemn vows which they are to make, and the great and important ends of the sacramental service. Here instructions should be plain, full and diversified. When faithfully given, there are few exercises in which a pastor engages that are calculated to be more profitable to himself, and of greater benefit to those who are committed to his care. To be instrumental in leading the young and others up to the banqueting house, and under the banner of love, is an honour and privilege of no ordinary kind. As difficulties are cleared out of the way, and light beams upon the path, both the teacher and the taught are made to feel that wisdom's "ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."*

5. Finally, this pastoral training should embrace, as far as possible, *the requiring of candidates for communion to engage actively in the duties which are implied in a religious profession*. Not only should the young and others be taught the nature and obligations of prayer: it should be seen by parents and pastors that they are prayerful. Pastors should lead them to pray in private and in society, as well as pray with them and for them. All religious instruction should aim to influence the heart and life, as well as to enlighten the understanding. "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." "What man is he that feareth the Lord, him shall He teach in the way that He shall choose."† The grand way of profiting by pastoral teaching is to practise what we know. We are thus led to feel the value of instruction, and

* Isa. xlii. 10; Ezek. xxxiv. 26.

† John vii. 17; Ps. xxv. 12.

to thirst after higher attainments in the knowledge of divine things. The service of Christ is found to be freedom and joy. In keeping His commandments, there is a great reward. Doing good to others, we reap a double benefit and blessing ourselves ; and as we learn to do the will of God actively and lovingly, we "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." There is no more important part of pastoral training than that which leads candidates for the Lord's Supper to engage in the duties of personal religion, and in the work of Christian usefulness. When thus led, they come as tried and devoted servants, to meet with their blessed and beloved Master—to rejoice in His work—and to pledge their vows to more hearty and devoted obedience. And their high privilege is to hear His loving command, and to realize the fulfilment of His gracious promise—"If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be : If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."*

II.—NECESSITY OF FAITHFUL PASTORAL OVERSIGHT AND DISCIPLINE IN PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Pastors are overseers of the church—the flock over which they are appointed by the Chief Shepherd. This superintendence comprehends not only vigilant inspection and constant watchful care ; it embraces likewise Scripture rule, and strict impartial discipline. The church for which sealing ordinances are provided, and to which they are to be administered, is an organized body, under Christ, its Head. He who walks amid the golden candlesticks, has the government upon His shoulders ; and while He enacts the laws of His kingdom, and presides in and renders effectual all its ordinances, He entrusts to officers called and appointed by Him, the government of His house, in subordination to His authority, and all that is needful to render it efficient for the promotion of His glory in the earth. Discipline is properly government in its due application. In reference to the visible church, it is the exercise of that authority, and the application of that system of laws which the Lord Jesus Christ, Zion's King, has appointed for His church. Its *ends* are the promotion of the glory of the Saviour—maintaining the purity and edification of the church—the spiritual good of offenders, and

* John xii. 26.

the benefit of others, without and within the church. Viewed in the light of Scripture precept and example, discipline is not to be regarded as a penance or punishment, or as the capricious exercise of stern authority—but as a divine ordinance, and a precious privilege, originated in the love of Christ—secured to the church by the purchase of His blood, and blessed by the Spirit to edification and advancement in holiness of her members. The objects of pastoral oversight and ecclesiastical discipline are all members of the church, whether baptized children, or such as, arrived at adult age, have been admitted to full fellowship, and are answerable to its officers and courts. The power of discipline is wholly spiritual, designed to bear upon the conscience, and to affect a person's standing in relation to the privileges of the church—whether as opening the door of admission, or as excluding from their enjoyment. Considered in these aspects, the vast importance of government and discipline to all that concerns the church's best interests is apparent. It is thereby maintained in holy separation from the world, and protected against the assaults of numerous enemies ;—its purity and efficiency are promoted, and it realizes the abundant blessing which flows from the authority and favour of its glorious and exalted King.

The necessity and value of faithful pastoral oversight and discipline are particularly seen in reference to the sacrament of the Supper. The ordinance is peculiar and *distinguishing*. It is provided for the friends of Christ, and as a means of spiritual fellowship with Him, and with saints in heaven and earth. It is designed to be the visible badge and seal of a holy profession ; and its high privileges and ends are only reached in connection with an approved holy character. Those who seek admission to the Lord's Supper are exposed to strong temptations, both before they come to the feast, and after partaking of the ordinance. The man who was without “the wedding-garment,” was singled out by the King, when He came in to see the guests, and was rejected and cast out as a wicked servant. The impenitent and ungodly are excluded, for we cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of devils, and the sacred feast must be kept, not the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The spiritual watchmen should descry danger coming ; and are required to give distinct warning, lest the blood of those who perish unawakened be required at

their hands. The character and conduct of those who come to the Lord's Supper are closely scanned by the world, as will be their spirit and deportment afterwards. These will either prove a means of blessing to others, or will throw a stumbling-block in their way, and be productive of much injury to the cause of religion.

Pastoral oversight and discipline, as a necessary preparation for the Supper, should be shown in *searching out and encouraging the weak and timid and doubting* of Christ's disciples—and *in discouraging and deterring the unworthy and presumptuous*. Babes are to be fed with milk and not with strong meat. The lambs of the flock are to be gathered with the arm and folded in the bosom of love, while the burdened and distressed are to be gently led. No small part of faithful pastoral care consists in administering help to the feeble—and light and direction to those who are of a doubtful mind. Stumbling-blocks are to be remembered—and the way prepared for Zion's travellers.

A chief object of pastoral oversight and discipline is *to fence* those who come to the Lord's Supper from *the manifold dangers* to which they are exposed. These arise from the evils of their own hearts, and from numerous temptations with which they are surrounded. Ignorance, proneness to rest in a mere outward profession—indulgence in secret sins—unmortified temper, and undue self-esteem—are *internal evils* that hinder acceptable approach to God in holy ordinances, and should therefore be the subject of special pastoral warning and reproof. Clean hands and a pure heart must characterize those who would ascend the hill of God, and dwell in His holy place. We must mortify the deeds of the body, that we may live. To run the Christian race set before us, it is indispensable that we lay aside every weight and every besetting sin, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith. There are *outward temptations*, too, against which candidates for communion need to be solemnly guarded. These arise from the devices of Satan working upon the corruptions of the heart; and from the company, pursuits, cares and pleasures of the world. Few who are beset with such temptations are aware of their power; and there is therefore special need that pastors should manifest constant vigilance, because the adversary goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour—and that the objects of their care should be guarded against the snares of the devil, and temptations from the world under which so many fall—that

they should, by sound counsel, and, if need be, by the exercise of scriptural discipline be rescued from the paths of the destroyer.

Furthermore, such oversight and discipline are required for guiding *candidates in the way of truth and peace*. Pastors are appointed as guides to the flocks entrusted to their care. They are not only to teach the right and true way, but from personal experience, to recommend it to others. They should be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and should have a care lest the halting should be turned out of the way. Ever should they be prepared to say unto others—"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us." "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." Pastoral instruction and guidance have constraining power when they are offered as the fruit of heartfelt experience. They who have themselves trodden the path of peace, and who have had experience of the trials, difficulties and pleasantness of the way of holiness, are the best guides to conduct others to the mount of privilege. The life and spirit of such enforce the lessons which they inculcate, and lead those who are impressed and attracted by them to say—"We will go with you, for we have heard God is with you." "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Faithful discipline, combined with such an example, forms a scriptural fence to the way of duty and privilege—always needed, to deter the wandering and backsliding—to guard it from the steps of the unclean, or the intrusion of ravenous beasts—and to appropriate it for the walk of the redeemed.

Not less necessary are pastoral oversight and discipline to lead those who seek admission to the Lord's Supper to *all fruitful holy living*. To promote this is one great object of the organization of the church, and of fellowship in holy ordinances. For this the church is represented as "a garden enclosed," and an orchard of pleasant plants. She is "a vineyard planted by the Beloved, in "a very fruitful hill." "He fenced it—gathered out the stones thereof—and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein; and He looked that it should bring forth grapes."* Our Lord, in His discourse in the upper chamber, at the institution of the Supper, laid chief stress on spiritual fruitfulness, as characteristic of those who were admissible to the feast, as well as distinctive of such as derive spiritual

* Isa. v. 1, 2.

benefit from it. His chosen people are vital, fertile branches of the true vine. They are "purged" or pruned, by the word in the hand of the Spirit, and by scriptural discipline, that they "may bring forth more fruit." Excrescences and whatever would mar fruitfulness are excised. God's people are impressively taught that a chief evidence of their election to privilege—and of their calling to glorify God, and a main evidence of true discipleship, are seen here—"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth fruit." "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."* A chief concern of the pastoral care, and an eminent object of faithful discipline, should be to prepare for sacramental privilege those who by profession as members of the visible church, are branches in Christ mystical, for bearing fruit unto holiness, that they may give evidence of genuine discipleship, and may glorify the Father in heaven.

Finally, true pastoral oversight and faithful discipline are necessary in order to exhibit the fellowship of the church *as reflecting the beauty of holiness*. The church visible in the world is designed to show the nearest conformity to the church invisible—a spiritual house—a chosen generation—a holy nation—a peculiar people. Through the abundant effusion of the Spirit, thus it will appear in the promised era of future enlargement. It shall be "the habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness"—praised and blessed by saints and holy angels. "Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit round about shall be most holy. Behold this is the *law of the house*."† The most important work as well as the brightest privilege, of the ministry and eldership of the church is to be instrumental in effecting this joyful consummation. Such a glorious end demands their earnest constant oversight, and the exercise of faithful government and discipline. The reward of fidelity here is that, amid a sense of unworthiness and manifold trials and discouragements, faithful pastors are contributing to the accomplishment of a gracious purpose which will hereafter render the church most beautiful—the joy of all the earth—and which shall ultimately bring all nations to submit to the sceptre of Immanuel. The oversight and discipline, that will be effective of such high ends and objects must be diligent—faithful—loving and tender—and ever exercised in dependence on the influence and blessing of the divine Spirit.

* John xv. 5, 8.

† Ezek. xlivi. 12.

SEASON OF HUMILIATION AND FASTING.

Besides the public instructions imparted in the regular Sabbath services of the ministry, it seems proper and suitable to set apart seasons for special preparation for the observance of the sacrament of the Supper. Days of public *humiliation and fasting* before the sacrament have been attended to by the different sections of the Protestant Church from an early period; and though these cannot be pleaded for, on the ground of a direct scriptural prescription, or from their being in all cases indispensably necessary, yet, on various accounts, they may be shown to be highly useful; and they should not be laid aside, without sufficient and weighty reasons. The practice divinely enjoined under the Old Testament to observe, says of "holy convocation," in which "no servile work" was to be done, gives a prescriptive warrant for a similar observance under the new economy. The strong pressure of worldly engagements, in our day, on the members of the church, seeking to engross their whole time, and thoughts; and the meditation, prayer, and self-examination that are required for a due attendance on the ordinance, show the importance of a special season of humiliation and fasting, as a preparation for the sacramental Supper. The discourses delivered on such an occasion, should aim to be pointed, discriminating and searching—exhibiting the nature and necessity of evangelical repentance—showing the duty of solemn self-examination—the graces which should be in lively exercise, and the frame of spirit towards fellow-communicants and all men, which we should cherish in coming to the Lord's table. With faith and love, and godly sorrow for sin, and spiritual joy in lively exercise, we should go forth to meet the Bridegroom, as He comes to the marriage supper. We are enjoined to keep the feast—"not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness"—but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* The private retirement secured in a season of public fasting may be most useful to individuals, if it is improved in personal self trial, by a review of the past life, of the improvement of privileges and solemn engagements, and by acts of personal covenanting.

On the day of public humiliation, or on a season devoted to preaching the word, and to acts of united worship, immediately preceding the sacramental feast, the practice of declaring

* 1 Cor. v. 8.

publicly, and expounding and applying explicit "*Terms of ecclesiastical communion*," appears suitable, and when properly performed is calculated to subserve highly valuable purposes. The public profession solemnly made or renewed at the sacramental table should embrace a confession of submission to Christ Jesus as King and Head of the church—avouching His truth, and obedience to His laws. The fellowship sought in the ordinance consists in maintaining the same doctrines, and adorning them by the same constant course of holy living. In a religious profession, as in things civil, the maxim holds good, "*Two cannot walk together except they be agreed.*" We have the clearest testimony that, in the day of Primitive Christianity, those who assembled together for the breaking of bread," were of one spirit and of one mind, "*striving together for the faith of the gospel.*"* "*They continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine, and in fellowship, and breaking of bread, and in prayers.*"†

Terms of ecclesiastical communion may be fuller or less extensive, according to the position and circumstances of the church, whose profession they are employed to declare. But it is evidently proper that they should be plain, and comprehensive, embracing the fundamental truths of a Christian profession and practice—holding fast all past scriptural attainments of the church—testifying against all departure from "the faith once delivered to the saints"—and giving a distinct pledge to the observance of all divine ordinances, and to the duties of true godliness.

It may not be objected against the practice of enunciating terms of communion in connexion with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, as a part of the preparation, that this is to render the ordinance *sectarian*—and that it excludes those whom the Saviour Himself welcomes to the feast. The Scriptural rule for admission to the privileges of church fellowship is an intelligent profession of the truth, and a becoming godly walk. We are commanded to "walk by the same rule" to which we have already attained—and to "withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly, and not according to inspired apostolic tradition."‡ The claim to admit all professing Christians to the Lord's table—whatever be their views of the doctrines of the word, or however diversified their religious profession and practice, most evidently sets at nought the

* Philipp. i. 27. † Acts ii. 42. ‡ Philipp. iii. 16; 2 Thes. iii. 6.

authority of the Redeemer as the Head of the church—does injury to precious truth—and goes on the principle that saintship is the ground of admission to church privileges—constituting too the officers of the church the judges in a matter which is wholly beyond their province or power to decide. For persons of different religious professions to come together for occasional communion is to give the most solemn public sanction to the existence of sects and divisions in the church—and to erect an effectual barrier against unity in the faith, worship and practice which the Saviour teaches His people earnestly to seek, and to expect as the glory of the church in the last times. The faithful exhibition and proper use of scriptural terms of communion in connexion with sacramental services are eminently fitted to keep fresh in the minds of the officers and members of the church the great principles of true religion—to lead to mutual confidence and love towards those who make the same profession—and to excite and encourage them to earnest effort for the promotion of the truth, and to consistent holy living.*

The act of admission to the sacramental table is an important exercise of ecclesiastical discipline; and those who are thus admitted should afterwards be carefully watched over, and be guarded and protected from evil by the government and discipline of the house of God.

* See Appendix.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND EXERCISES OF A COMMUNION SABBATH.

THE Sabbath on which the sacrament of the Supper is dispensed has not unfrequently or unsuitably been designated "THE GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST." It appears every way proper that the various religious services on this day should be conducted so as to form a solemn appropriate commemoration of Christ's death, and to be suited to communion in the body and blood of Christ. While care should be taken that the services should not be unduly lengthened or burdensome, and that in no respect they should savour of superstition, yet a hasty, perfunctory administration of the Supper should be avoided as tending to lower a sacred ordinance, and to encourage persons to come to the Lord's table in an improper state. On the part of the minister, the subject of the discourse preceding the administration should be closely connected with the covenant of peace—the purpose and plan of human redemption—and the Person and work of the Mediator. It should clearly set forth those "things into which angels ever desire to look"—the sufferings of Christ, and His subsequent glory. Discourses on themes that do not aid devout meditation, and the exercise of faith on the love of Christ, His atonement, and His character, and work in heaven, however eloquent and impressive, should be regarded as unsuitable for such a season. Those who preach should regard it as a special duty to seek a message from God suitable to the solemn occasion, and should aim to have heart-preparation in studying and delivering it. Those to whom the word is spoken are called to seek in fervent prayer divine assistance for those who proclaim the word of salvation. They should themselves mix faith with the hearing and earnestly plead that the Spirit would render the message delivered efficacious. The sacrament has been justly said to be "an appendage to the word of the gospel." It is designed to excite and strengthen faith in the word, by exhibiting it symbolically in embodied action. According to this view, all

care should be shown by both ministers and hearers that the messages spoken and heard—both in matter and manner—should have the closest and most intimate connexion with the different part of the administration of the ordinance which follows.

SOLEMN SPECIAL WARNING, OR FENCING THE TABLES.*

The practice of *Warning*, or what is commonly termed *Fencing the Tables*, which was followed generally in the early times of the Reformation in Scotland, and to some extent by the Puritans in England, and in the Reformed church on the Continent, is a usage which, when rightly observed, serves important purposes in the dispensation of the Lord's Supper. Its place is immediately after the preaching of the sermon, and before the act of communicating in the sacrament. Its chief object is to maintain the purity of the ordinance, and to deter the ignorant and unworthy from coming presumptuously to eat and drink judgment to themselves, and from casting a stumbling-block before others, and thus bringing reproach on religion. After all, care has been taken to give instructions preparatory to the admission of persons to the communion, and to discriminate character in preaching the word, and by the discipline of the church, there is still need to address the consciences of those who come to the ordinance, and to warn them, as in the sight of God, of the sin and danger of a rash and unhallowed approach.

The act of official warning is an act of ministerial authority to be performed with an explicit reference to the glory of the great Master of the feast; and when performed with a due sense of its awful solemnity, it is calculated to have the most salutary influence upon all concerned. Like as when Israel came to a scene of communion and public covenanting at Mount Sinai, on the giving of the Law, “bounds” were set around the holy mount lest any should break through presumptuously, and incur the displeasure of Him whose name is Jealous, so should a fence be placed around the Lord's

* It may be questioned whether the phrase “*Fencing the Tables*,” which has been so long in use for this *particular* exercise, is the most proper. In the early times of the Reformation in Scotland, it was not used—the service was generally designated *warning*; and this would seem to be more suitable to designate a ministerial act—and the more so if the practice of *simultaneous* communicating be adopted.

table. The Lord is in Zion, as He was upon Sinai,—of great and terrible majesty—a holy and sin-hating God. The whole “limit of the mount” is most holy—this is the perpetual “law of the house.”*

The art of fencing the table—when rightly attended to, consists properly of two parts. 1. *The warning and deterring of the unworthy and unprepared;* and 2. *The authoritative invitation of those who are guests called by the King to the wedding supper.*

1. *The warning to prevent the intrusion of the unworthy.* Some lay aside this practice wholly, either from unfaithfulness, or from mistaken views of the nature and design of the institution. The duty of giving authoritative warning involves weighty responsibilities, and is encompassed with some difficulties. The minister, left in some sort to his own judgment, is in danger of making the fences which he places around the sacred table so wide—the exclusions so vague, that persons ignorant, and the most inconsistent professors are not deterred from the ordinance—or, on the other hand, of making them so narrow and exclusive, that humble and contrite ones whom the Master of the feast bids welcome may feel themselves shut out. Thus, in the one case and the other, the design of the Saviour in the ordinance is frustrated. The exercise of giving solemn warning to persons in relation to the communion should be only engaged in, after the most prayerful study; and the expressions used should never be random utterances, but should be “words fitly spoken”—and as “nails fastened by the masters of the assemblies.” Select portions of holy Scripture, both of the Old and New Testaments, judiciously chosen, may be suitably quoted in the commencement of the exercise. These are, in the fullest sense, sacred and authoritative. They are the fence which God has Himself erected around His own ordinance to protect it from profanation. Ministers should, when handling the Word, cherish a deep and awful concern not to admit to the Lord’s table any whom Christ excludes—and at the sametime, not to discourage and keep back any, even the weakest, whom He welcomes to the feast of His love. Such passages as Ex. xix. 12-14; xx. 1-18; Ezek. xliii. 10-13; and Gal. v. 13-22; Eph. iv. 17-32; 1 Cor. v. 7-12; vi. 19; Rev. xxi. 8; xxii. 12-15, may be suitably employed for instruction and warning; and when duly applied, these divine utterances

* Ezek. xiii. 10, 12.

have been blessed by the Spirit to the awakening and reproof of the unworthy. A brief and comprehensive enumeration of characters which are inconsistent with the work of grace in the soul, and which mark the unregenerate—such as the ignorant, the unbelieving, the impenitent, the disobedient, and those who are unacquainted with the constraining power of the love of Christ, and who do not walk after His example, has often been found an effectual fence for the sacred ordinance. The different precepts of the Decalogue, classified and applied according to the interpretation of the Great Lawgiver Himself, will always be most suitable for the inspection of character. The law is “the rule of life in the hands of the Mediator.” By it, the Spirit convinces of sin, and by it we shall be judged. The “righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* Under every dispensation, and in view of Christ’s second coming, and the final judgment, purity of heart and life is required of those who would draw near God, and have communion with Him. The fence in every case should have prominently inscribed upon it, “HOLINESS TO THE LORD.” Whenever God is approached —whether on the mercy-seat, or the communion table, or on the tribunal of judgment, we are to draw near with clean hands and a pure heart. Assembling at the table of the Lord, we gather together as the members of one redeemed family—and as saints who have made “a covenant with God by sacrifice.”† Whether Mount Sinai, with its thunders and clouds and darkness, or Mount Zion, with its harps and angelic hosts—each is, according to the divine will, to be guarded against all approach of the ungodly. All that is done in this exercise to preserve the sacred table from profanation should be done in entire dependence on the guidance and blessing of the Spirit, as He alone can convince of sin, and righteousness and judgment, and as His work is to glorify Christ, and to take the things which are His, and savingly reveal them.

2. The *Authoritative Invitation* of the called guests. As the sacramental feast is designed to be an eminent manifestation of sovereign free grace, its administration should display largely the kindness and compassion of the Saviour, and should hold out all encouragement to the weakest and humblest of His people to partake of its privileges. The invitations of the Master to the feast of His love are full and free; and His

* Rom. viii. 4.

† Ps. l. 6.

servants, acting in His name, should exemplify His spirit, in strengthening the weak, comforting those that mourn, and binding up the broken in heart. It is calculated to give a wrong view of the ordinance of the Supper, when, in the administration, much greater stress is laid upon the work of authoritatively excluding from the feast, than of inviting to its participation the friends of the Bridegroom. The “servant sent forth at supper-time” is commanded to go again and again to announce that all is now “ready,” and “yet there is room”—and to urge them “in the streets and lanes” of the city, and to “compel” those in “the highways and hedges” to come, that the “house may be filled.”* The invitations tendered should be *discriminating*, indicating clearly the features of character of them that are friends of Christ, and members of His mystical body. They should be *tender and compassionate*, expressive of the pity and loving-kindness of the Saviour; and they should always be presented in such a manner as to exhibit the love of the Redeemer’s heart towards His ransomed people. Himself draws with “cords of love”—and “bands of a man.” His bowels yearn over the penitent and sorrowful. He “gathers the lambs with His arms, and lays them in His bosom, and gently leads the burdened and distressed.” The “Spirit of the Lord anointed Him to preach glad tidings unto the meek—and to appoint unto mourners, and to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”† His servants bearing His commission, when dispensing in His name the ordinance which above all others, shows forth the kindness and love of God our Saviour, should aim to display the same spirit, and to be instruments for effecting His gracious work. It is theirs to comfort God’s people, and to speak comfortably to Jerusalem. In the immediate prospect of going to the sacramental feast, they should seek to lift up the Saviour, as a moral magnet that all men may be drawn to Him. They should so lead those who are brought to the banqueting-house, that “the banner of love” may be seen displayed above and around them. The Scripture marks of the regenerate and of growth in grace, supply suitable directions for this part of the exercise, and the large and full invitations and promises of the gospel may be most suitably presented to encourage the children of God to come to the feast of fat things prepared in the mountain of the Lord’s

* Luke xiv. 17, 21-23.

† Isa. lxi. 1-3.

house. Such passages as Mat. v. 3-13; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Gal. v. 22-26; Isa. lv. 1-5; Rev. xvii. 16, 17, and Song ii. 8-14, will be found most appropriate for inviting the friends of Christ to the feast of communion. They should be spoken and heard as the words of the Redeemer Himself embodying His loving and authoritative commands and cheering promises; and when they are judiciously presented, either wholly, or in a selection from such passages, we cannot doubt that they are often blessed as a word of power to bring nigh a willing people who appear in "the beauties of holiness," as dew from the womb of the morning.*

3. Following the act of fencing the tables, the minister suitably reads, as the divine warrant for dispensing the ordinance, the words of institution, as they are most fully recorded in 1 Cor. xi. 23-32. This may be done simply without comment, or, in case any remarks are made, they should be chiefly of a devotional and practical nature. Lengthened exposition, or controversial discussion is singularly out of place here, as having a tendency to lead away the thoughts from the great act of commemorating the dying love of the Redeemer, and from the absorbing engagement of heart that is required for enjoying communion with Him and His saints. After reading the formula of institution, the material elements in the Supper are to be set apart for a sacred and symbolical use, by the invocation of the divine name, by thanksgiving and solemn prayer and supplication. This has been not unfrequently termed the *Consecration Prayer*, and when properly understood, the designation is in no respect unsuitable. It simply constitutes them, according to divine direction, sacred symbols of spiritual things, and separates and sets them apart from a common to a sacramental use. Our Lord, in appointing the Lord's Supper, again gave thanks, or blessed in taking both the bread and wine as He declared them to be emblems of His body broken and blood shed, though on entering the upper chamber, He had spoken the usual benediction. The prayer offered, in taking the sacramental elements, with this object, is a necessary step for constituting them ordained symbols of sacred mysteries, and the appointed means of blessing upon their use in this sacramental observance. The cases are not few, in which, while the prayer is being uttered, devout worshippers have been made

* For a specimen of this exercise, see Appendix.

to feel that God was in the solemn assembly, and they have had the assured hope that He would meet with them and bless them.

THE ACT OF COMMUNICATING IN THE LORD'S SUPPER.

This may be done, either by the members taking their seats in order at different tables, separate from the mass of the worshippers, or by their all occupying at once a distinct place in the house of worship, as if assembled together at one table.* The practice in Presbyterian churches in these and other countries, till of late, was generally for communicants to be ranged at different tables in succession—not unfrequently at so many as five and six, or even more—and to have separate addresses spoken to each group. This of necessity rendered the service protracted, and somewhat burdensome. It would certainly seem more in accordance with the original institution and primitive practice to have all the communicants gathered at once and at the same time, as a family, partaking of the symbols of redeeming love. It is everyway suitable, that when the elements are dispensed to communicants, and they are partaking of them, the action should be performed in silence, that their meditations may be undisturbed, and that in the exercises of faith and repentance and personal covenanting, they may feel that they are alone with God, in a place which is to them “the house of God, and the gate of heaven.” It is calculated to aid devout spiritual exercises, for the minister afterwards to give brief pointed addresses to communicants, presenting to their minds the great objects which the sacrament of the Supper is designed to bring into view—the abundant provision of the covenant—the sufferings and death of the Redeemer—the privileges of the gospel—and the engagements and encouragements to holy devotedness of those who enjoy them. Instructions on the duties of religion, and directions to holy living, are appropriate to the circumstances of communicants assembled at the Lord's table; and there is no occasion on which, when these are suitably given, they are calculated to make a deeper and more lasting impression.

There is no exercise connected with the administration of the Lord's Supper more solemn and affecting than that of ministers addressing communicants, when they are partaking of the sacramental elements, and profoundly engaged in com-

* See Appendix—“*Simultaneous Partaking.*”

memorating by faith and love the Saviour's death, in realizing the communion of saints, and in acts of personal self-dedication. Ministers should therefore carefully avoid the bringing forward of aught that is vague or unsuitable to the occasion, and whatever resembles mere sermonizing. They should aim to speak from the heart the language of real believing experience. They should utter words as standing in the immediate presence of the King, to persons who have been admitted to the audience-chamber, and such as, by the blessing of the Spirit, may excite into lively exercise all holy graces, and may bring near the joys of heaven, and the momentous realities of eternity. Addresses at the sacramental table which are general, argumentative, and that want spiritual unction, are unprofitable, and disturbing to the minds of godly persons. On the other hand, such as are lively, experimental, and adapted to the circumstances and frames of God's people—when admitted to the feast of fat things prepared in the mountain of the Lord's house, have often been greatly blessed, at the time they were spoken, and have been productive of gracious effects that remained long afterwards. There are few things that ministers should more earnestly seek in prayer than to be directed aright to address communicants at the sacramental table, and that the Holy Spirit should bless the words spoken.*

The services of the high-day of the feast may be suitably concluded with a discourse in the evening; and if the following day is observed publicly as a season of immediate thanksgiving,† a sermon on the obligations arising from renewed privileges and acts of solemn self-dedication, and on the duties of bearing testimony for precious truth, and of holy living, forms a suitable conclusion of the sacramental feast. The presiding minister should at the last present a brief and clear summary of the spiritual instructions given on the solemn occasion, followed by pointed, practical directions, and con-

* See Appendix.

† In the period of the first Reformation in Scotland, meetings for public worship were not held on Monday after the communion-Sabbath. They came into use in the time of the second Reformation, in connection with the memorable revival at the Kirk of Shotts. Originating thus as a special service brought in through the outpouring of the Spirit, their continuance in ordinary times is calculated to deepen religious impressions and quicken spiritual life—though, were the Lord's Supper to be more frequently dispensed in the church, the public services of the communion Monday might be laid aside, without injury to the cause of vital religion.

firmed by reading select appropriate passages of Holy Scripture.

Ecclesiastical history informs us, that in the primitive Christian church, the dispensation of the Eucharist was regularly followed by a *thanksgiving-offering*. Immediately after the communicants retired from the sacramental table, they cast into the sacred treasury individually an offering for the relief of the poor and afflicted, and for other purposes connected with the work of the church. A practice of this kind would still be a suitable expression of gratitude for spiritual blessings received, and of the vow by which communicants dedicated themselves and all they have to the Lord. It is peculiarly befitting for a congregation to close the services of a communion with taking united prayerful counsel for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and in presenting a dedicated portion of their worldly substance for the promotion of the cause of Christian missions. Where a practice of this kind has been adopted, it has been attended by the happiest effects in reviving godliness among the people themselves, and in leading them to fervent prayer and devoted exertions for the world's conversion. Sacramental vows are thus felt binding us to live not to ourselves—but to yield ourselves, our influence, and all that we have to spread the Saviour's renowned fame, that the whole earth may be filled with His glory.

CHAPTER V.

LORD'S SUPPER.—THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF THE SIN OF UNWORTHILY COMMUNICATING.

THE Apostle Paul, in the account which he gives, when writing to the Corinthian church, of the institution of the Lord's Supper, lays particular stress on the sin and danger of partaking "*unworthily*" in the ordinance. Twice, in the most marked connections, he makes mention of the sin, and holds out solemn warning against its commission. He urges self-examination as a necessary preparation to preserve the communicant from using the sacramental elements *unworthily*, and by so doing be "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Again, he represents the person who eats and drinks unworthily, as eating and drinking "damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body;" and declares that for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."—(1 Cor. xi. 27, 29, 30.)

It has been observed, that in the account of the original institution by our Lord, as recorded by these evangelists, there is no allusion to communicating unworthily. When the Apostle Paul wrote, at the distance of a quarter of a century after the crucifixion, the church had become widely extended; multitudes of all classes were added to its membership; and various corruptions of holy ordinances had entered, which required to be arrested, that the purity of the faith might be preserved, and that the ends of Christian institutions might be accomplished. Hence, the apostle, having fully before him some glaring abuses and perversions of the sacred feast, in practices that prevailed in the Corinthian church, guided by the Spirit, explicitly pointed out the aggravated sin, and solemnly warned against its dread consequences. All past experience testifies that numbers have been prone to commit the same sin of communicating unworthily; and even in the present day, that in the purest evangelical churches, there are multitudes of the members who need to be called to the serious consideration of this subject. Faithfulness to the Author of the ordinance, and to men's souls, requires that ministers

and office-bearers of the church should point out plainly the nature of this particular sin, and that they should seek to save those who are entrusted to their care from the guilt and fearful consequences of its commission.

As preliminary to showing the nature and effects of partaking in the Lord's Supper unworthily, it seems proper to remark that, through want of considering carefully the terms employed by the apostle, the matter has been understood so as to act injuriously on the spirit and conduct of members. The qualifying epithet to eating and drinking has been taken, as if it were an *adjective* instead of an *adverb*, and as if it applied immediately to the *character* of the communicant, instead of designating the *manner of observing the ordinance*. The original word ἀναγιως, cannot refer in the primary sense to personal qualifications; it does not declare the *unfitness* of persons to partake of the sacrament, but the *manner* in which this is done. It means only observing the feast in an unworthy manner—in a spirit and way, and for purposes unsuitable to the nature of the ordinance, and for the ends for which it was instituted.* Were this distinction kept properly in view, it might remove hindrances out of the way of weak and timid believers coming to the Supper; and might prevent the dark conclusion to which some doubting Christians are prone, that communicating unworthily amounts to the “unpardonable sin.” Some, fixing the mind unduly on the apostle's expression, and misunderstanding it, are deterred from coming, on the ground that, as they feel themselves to be unworthy, they would only expose themselves to condemnation, by partaking of the ordinance. They purpose, therefore, to delay till they

* “The apostle doth not say—Whatsoever unworthy person eats and drinks of this cup, *i.e.*, for thus he had excluded every man, himself too. For who is worthy enough for these things? as the apostle speaks in another case—‘Who is sufficient for these things?’ The apostle requires not here a meritoriousness. Merit belongs to Christ dying, worthiness to the believer receiving. He speaks not of the worthiness of the person, but a worthiness of the action. A man may want a worthiness of person to be employed in a prince's service, yet not want a worthiness of parts which fit him, being engaged in it, to manage his employ for his own and his prince's honour. Or, if a poor man be called to a prince's table, he is, because of his poverty and distance, unworthy to sit with him; yet being invited he may come; but if he behaves himself uncivilly and indecently, he makes himself guilty of a contempt of the royal majesty in whose presence he is *unworthy* to live, notes the want of an evangelical frame and disposition of heart.”—*Charnock's Works*, vol. iv. p. 473.

are more worthy ; or, as they imagine, better prepared. This is not only a misapplication and perversion of the inspired words, but also a dangerous error. None are in themselves worthy of any privilege of the gospel, or of admission to any ordinance ; and they cannot, by any preparation of their own, render themselves worthy. Believers themselves, if they would find acceptance, must rest wholly on the worth and worthiness of the Redeemer. Even with the deepest consciousness of unfitness, we may—if relying altogether on His merits, and desiring to glorify Him, and to be saved by Him, approach to a sealing ordinance, and obtain the blessing.

The sin to which the apostle so pointedly refers is committed by those who come to the ordinance of the Supper in *an unregenerate state*. These being in enmity against God, profanely appropriate a provision which is designed only for His friends. They are in ignorance, and unacquainted with the truths of the Gospel, and its sacred privileges can neither be understood nor realized. The nature of the ordinance, the truths which it embodies and the profession which it implies, are unknown, and, consequently, participation in it is unsuitable and unprofitable. Spiritual knowledge is indispensable to the discerning of the Lord's body in the ordinance. Destitute of this—as every unregenerate person is, he cannot possibly receive any spiritual benefit ; but, on the contrary, he is exposed to rejection, and to the doom of the presumptuous offender. The unbelieving, the impenitent, and the carnal, in approaching the Lord's table, cannot do otherwise than communicate unworthily. Faith, in its principle and exercise, is indispensable to a due participation of the sacrament of the Supper. There may be some knowledge of gospel doctrines, and these may be intelligently professed, but without a living faith—the trust which appropriates Christ, and unites the soul to Him—there can be no right approach to holy ordinances. To come to them in such a condition only serves to confirm in unbelief the great damning sin under the gospel. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” “He that believeth not is condemned already” (Heb. xi. 7; John iii. 19). The unbelieving are impenitent; or, in other words, they are in love with sin and under its power. They are “carnally minded,” which “is death”—and it is therefore highly incongruous for them to engage in a service which implies abhorrence of all sin, and heartfelt trust in Him who died to put away sin by the sacrifice of

Himself. Such run the fearful risk of becoming hardened in impenitency, and of being given over to the lusts of their own hearts. Christ can have no fellowship with Belial ; we cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils.

It is not, however, the unregenerate alone, who are in danger of partaking unworthily of the Lord's Supper. The apostle evidently charges this guilt upon real Christians, as well as upon professed members of the Corinthian church. They are spoken of as "chastened of the Lord" for this sin, that that they "might not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 32), and their partaking unworthily is represented as consequent upon the neglect of self-examination. A believer himself may, through a drowsy, indolent, secure frame, be unfitted for communion with God in His ordinances, and for entering heaven. The Spouse, while indulging carnal security, was denied the gracious presence of the Beloved, even when after being awakened, she rose up to open to Him. David, after his great transgression, had not restored to him the joys of salvation, till he presented the sacrifice of a contrite heart.*

In various ways, true Christians themselves, may commit the sin of communicating unworthily. It behoves them at all times, when they purpose to come to this ordinance, to watch and pray against all the occasions and temptations to it. There must not only be the principle of a living faith in Christ in the heart, but faith *must be in exercise*, in order to coming with approval and acceptance. The wise virgins, though they had oil in their vessels—the principle of grace in their heart, were unfit to meet the Bridegroom, and go in to the marriage supper—till they rose and "trimmed their lamps"—till they had purged away the neglect and corruption of their profession, and had grace applied for quickening and illumination. The Corinthians are blamed by the apostle for profaning the ordinance, and bringing "shame" on the church of Christ, while yet he says, "ye are washed, and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11). Believers, through the power of indwelling sin and manifold temptations, instead of acting according to their principles, often walk contrary to them, and belie a holy profession. Whatever is not done by them in faith is sin. Hence men hear the Word, and pray and give charitable gifts unworthily—when faith is inoperative, and they are actuated by

* Song v. 3; Ps. li. 12.

low unworthy motives in these services. No speculative belief or external aspects of faith, without faith itself in lively exercise, can be of any avail. If, in coming into "the Holiest of all"—the immediate Divine presence—it is requisite to "draw nigh" at all times, "in the full assurance of faith," the exercise of faith is peculiarly required in approaching to the Lord's table. All the great objects of faith are therein presented in the most vivid and affecting manner. The whole feast is emphatically the feast of faith. We are invited to it for the direct purpose of exercising this grace, and of having it invigorated and satisfied. The whole benefit and blessing to be received by us in the ordinance is dependent on the vigorous actings of faith in our hearts. "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." To come then to the ordinance of the Supper without the lively exercise of faith at the time is, in all respects, inconsistent, and must incur the guilt of partaking unworthily.

Again, when sin is *not laid aside and mortified*, the same evil is the result. If we would draw near into the Holiest of all, we must come, having "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed as with pure water" (Heb. x. 22). They are required to have "clean hands and a pure heart," who would "ascend into the hill of God, and stand in His holy place" (Ps. xxiv. 4). We cannot but communicate unworthily if we have *different ends* from those which Christ had in the institution of the Supper. These were the putting away of sin, and communion with His people in holiness. A main object in coming to the ordinance is to have sin mortified and grace strengthened, that we may worship in the beauty of holiness. The remains of corruption in believers do not disqualify them from partaking of the Supper, but voluntary defilements do. The love of any besetting sin in the heart—the allowed indulgence of a darling lust, however secret, is wholly incompatible with the character and ends of the ordinance. Even when acts of sin are refrained from for the time, while yet the habits and affections remain unsubdued, the person who thus comes to the ordinance can only look for being disapproved and rejected. If we keep the feast, it must be—"not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness," but "with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. v. 8).

Want of *conscientious preparation* for the sacramental feast

moreover, exposes to the risk of communicating unworthily. The apostle enjoins careful self-examination in immediate connection with his declaring the sin, implying that thus it may be avoided. Under the Old Testament dispensation, explicit and reiterated injunctions were given, in reference to the necessity of special preparation for approaching to holy ordinances. The people were to separate themselves from natural indulgences, and all ceremonial defilement, and to sanctify themselves as holy to the Lord. The standing law of access in all prescribed worship was—"I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified" (Lev. x. 3). Not less incumbent is actual special preparation under the gospel, in coming to ordinances which are more spiritual in their nature and ends. The recorded acts of the Saviour in connection with the first institution of the Supper—in coming up to Bethany for retirement and meditation before the feast—in directing two of His followers to make special preparation for it, and in the searching warnings and directions which He addressed to His apostles at the Table—all inculcate the need of special preparation. If we come without having on the "wedding garment," we can only expect to be detected and cast out by the King. The Beloved will not come into His garden to have communion with His people till He is met and welcomed by the diffusive fragrance of holy graces. All right preparation for communion is from Christ Himself, the Author of the ordinance, and through the operation of the Spirit; but we are deeply criminal if, unconscious of the need of it, we seek it not from Him, and we do not earnestly plead His promise for its attainment.

The spirit or frame of mind cherished in waiting on the ordinance may clearly indicate *partaking unworthily*—as does also all undue *resting on it*, as the *end* instead of the *means* of grace and salvation. The great sin of the Jews was depending upon a righteousness which was only external and partial, and not seeking after the righteousness which is of faith. Want of love to our neighbour as ourselves—alienation towards brethren—all self-seeking, and envy, and covetousness are opposed to the principle of holy obedience, and altogether inconsistent with that communion of saints which is a main object of the sacramental feast. It is fearfully evil to regard the observance of the Supper as, in any sense, a ground of our acceptance with God, and to rest on the outward signs and elements

for what can only be obtained through union with Christ and fellowship with God. To resort to the Feast with an exclusive view to the enjoyment of privileges, without regarding the service chiefly as an act of holy obedience for promoting the divine glory—and without the purpose to renew sacramental engagements, manifests a spirit that must lead to unworthily partaking. In all these cases, the great ends of the ordinance are overlooked and slighted; the service is only, in God's sight, formal and hypocritical, and the rebuke to those who offer it can only be, "Who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination unto me: the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even your solemn meeting" (*Isa. i. 12, 13*).

The greatness and aggravated nature of this sin may be seen in various lights:

First—The apostle represents it as *an implicit taking part with the Jews in crucifying the Saviour.* "*Whosoever eateth and drinketh unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*" The material symbols used in the Supper represent Christ's body broken and His blood shed. Those who use these in a light and irreverent manner, constructively treat Christ's body and blood with profaneness and contempt. They evince themselves to be one in spirit with those who put the Saviour to death—who cried, "Away with Him, crucify Him." They manifest the same feelings toward the crucified Redeemer as His murderers did. In some respects, their crime is even more heinous than that of the Jews, since the enmity of the latter was against the Saviour's person as a blasphemer, but this is against His atoning sacrifice, and is contempt of Him as a Redeemer. Instead of betaking himself to Him as a guilty sinner for salvation, the person who partakes unworthily makes light of His sacrifice, and virtually contemns the only provision for pardon and cleansing. Such a spirit cannot but be infinitely abhorrent to God, and must provoke His fearful displeasure.

Secondly—It is *a gross profanation of a sacred ordinance.* The Lord's Supper has a peculiarly near relation to God; and has impressed upon it the image of Christ, as displayed in His matchless perfections. To neglect and profane it is to do dishonour to that which is designed eminently to manifest His glory and excellency. How fearfully evil must it be to sit at

the Lord's table with a mind hostile to the Master of the feast, and under the mask of friendship, to lift up the heel of rebellion while eating His bread ! Such conduct cannot but merit the severest rebuke and punishment.

Thirdly—When it is further considered that this sin is committed against the greatest and *most affecting display of the Saviour's love and mercy*, it appears greatly aggravated. The death of Christ is the noontide manifestation of His love to sinful men. The ordinance which commemorates it was instituted as the richest display of His condescending grace. It was given as a love-token from a dying friend, and designed to be a perpetual great love-feast. On the Saviour appointing it, the evangelist gives as a preface to the institution—"Having loved His own which are in the world, He loved them to the end" (John xiii. 1)—evidently implying that the Supper was ordained to be the highest and last pledge of His love to His people—requiring that all who observe it should feel the constraining power of the Saviour's unspeakable love, and His condescending grace ; and that they should reciprocate it, by giving Him, in return, the supreme affection of the heart. The withholding of this is a manifest perversion and abuse of the ordinance, and must cause the offering to be entirely rejected.

The *consequences* of this profanation are declared to be evil and most injurious. "Whosoever eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself." The original term here used does not mean, as has frequently been supposed, the final destruction of the wicked in hell, but "*judgment*," as given in the margin, or "*condemnation*." The word is used figuratively for a sentence, the result of an act of judging. The action of communicating unworthily incurs the Divine displeasure, and is followed by chastisements in this life, which, if they fail to reform, may issue in eternal punishment. These judgments may be temporal, in outward calamities, and bodily afflictions, terminating even in death. The apostle evidently refers to such when he says—"For this cause, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." And he intimates that these are inflicted at times on true Christians ; for their death is designated by the milder term "*sleep* ;" and the judgment is sent not to destroy, but to profit them—"That when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 32). The Corinthians

who ate and drank unworthily had inflicted on them temporal judgments—weakness, sickness, and death—and this that they might not be condemned and perish with the world.

While we may not positively affirm or deny that the same profanation of the Lord's Supper is still followed by the infliction of bodily disease and death, it seems undeniable that Divine chastisements and rebukes of a solemn and awful character are inflicted even upon true Christians on this account. Spiritual judgments, which are the most fearful punishments of sin in this world, are sometimes sent to punish irreverent approaches to holy ordinances and presumptuous sinning. A Christian, for indolence, lukewarmness, and the indulgence of secret sin, may be given over for a time to coldness, hardness of heart, and spiritual deadness. He may be left to insensibility, and the loss of spiritual comfort. His evidences of grace may become obscure, and the curse of barrenness may be upon him. The clouds are “commanded to rain no rain upon the vineyard,”* and withering and decay mark the withdrawal of life-giving influences. Backsliding and apostacy, beginning in the heart and closet, and extending to the sanctuary, indicate the sad effects of the Divine displeasure, on account of ordinances profaned, and privileges misimproved. When this becomes open, and the cause of declension is persevered in, the consequences are most afflictive and deplorable. Repeated visitations of God's heavy displeasure, in temporal disappointments and afflictions, connected with various forms of spiritual judgment, show God's vengeance upon the deeds, even when He pardons the sin (Ps. xcix. 8). He winnows them, and empties them from vessel to vessel. He makes them “to drink wine of astonishment,” and every morning they “receive chastisement anew.” When awakened to a due sense of the sin, and its melancholy consequences,—inward distress, causing self-accusations, regrets, and embittered sorrow, make the penitent to go on his way heavy burdened and mourning; and long afterwards, the sad effects of profanation of the sacred ordinance may cause a person to walk in darkness and have no light. The case of David, as recorded in his personal history, and expressed in the penitential psalms, shows the aggravated evil of sinning against light, breaking solemn vows, and provoking God to abandon us. And the fall of Peter, with the bitter penitential sorrow

* Isa. v. 6.

which followed, holds out the most solemn and distinct warning against all self-confidence, when we come to a sacred ordinance, and to the enjoyment of the highest privileges.

The grand preventive of the sin of unworthily communicating is clearly indicated by the apostle when he repeatedly enjoins self-examination, and when he adds, in the close, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Cor. xi. 31). The original terms are strongly expressive, pointing to the source of partaking unworthily by not discerning the Lord's body. The phrases are similar. *Not discriminately judging, or distinguishing in judging* in the latter case; and so by *discriminately judging ourselves*, we will be held back from the great transgression, and will escape present judgments and condemnation with the world.

Two remarks may only be added in conclusion:—1. The matter of partaking unworthily is not to be estimated by depression of spirit, heart-wanderings, and the want of spiritual comfort and joy after coming away from the ordinance. The root of spiritual joy is the life and exercise of grace, though the fruit itself is not always visible. The Syrophenician woman was pronounced by the Saviour to be strong in faith, when yet she wanted a sense of the Lord's kindness. And Jacob was made sensible of the weakness which he bore ever after, at the time that, as a prince with God, he had power and prevailed. So, if the want of sensible comfort after communicating in the Supper, leads us to walk humbly—distrusting ourselves, and clinging to the Rock of salvation, this will be evidence that we have not been chargeable with the guilt of partaking unworthily. 2. Even when this *great sin has been committed*, there is sufficient comfort and hope in the experience that it is not unpardonable. The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is able to cleanse from this, as well as all other sins. Our immediate duty is to have recourse to it for pardon, and purification, and the sense of forgiveness. Thus may it be declared of us—as of the Corinthians who were chargeable with various foul transgressions—“*Such are some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*” (1 Cor. vi. 11).

CHAPTER VI.

SPIRIT IN WHICH THE LORD'S SUPPER IS TO BE RECEIVED.

THE doctrine of sacred Scripture, as set forth in the symbolical books of the Reformed Church, is that the sacraments are intended for believers, and that those alone can derive spiritual benefit from partaking of them. They have generally been regarded by all sound evangelical divines as *confirming* and not as *converting* ordinances. At different periods, in the history of the Protestant Church, as in the Erastian controversy in the Westminster Assembly, and a century later among the Congregationalists in New England, a few were found maintaining that the Lord's Supper is designed as a means of conversion, and that therefore such as have not believed or been regenerated may be admitted to partake of it. But this sentiment was so completely exposed and refuted, in the one case, by such distinguished writers as Rutherford and Gillespie, and in the other, by Jonathan Edwards, that it has not since been revived in the Reformed Churches. A few in recent times, who plead for laxity in administering the Supper, seem to argue for the admission of the ignorant and unawakened, on the ground that this may be the means of their conversion to God; but those who do this adduce so little from Scripture or from the approved practice of the church in past times, in favour of such views, that they have little or no claim to acceptance.

Those who receive the sacraments aright have been previously qualified by the power of faith. These ordinances are appointed for the exhibition and exercise of faith; and the great blessings which they are designed to confer, can only be realized in the way of believing. "Christ and the benefits of the new covenant, are in them, represented, sealed and applied to believers." While they strengthen and increase the faith of recipients, they confirm to them the abundant provision of "all" salvation blessings. The church and its ministers have, for the rule of admission—not the actual possession of faith, but a credible profession. Our Westminster Standards very plainly declare this distinction. While they show the nature of the

profession that is required for the enjoyment of communion in the church, they teach explicitly that those only who are in a state of grace are entitled in God's sight to partake of the sacraments. This is fully implied in the account which they give of the *nature* and *objects* of these ordinances. In the *Shorter Catechism* they are declared to be "holy ordinances, whereby Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers." In the *Larger Catechism* (Quest. 102), they are said, in their nature, to "signify and seal the benefits of Christ's mediation to believers," and their object is declared to be "to strengthen in them faith and all other graces." Then other objects are mentioned—"to oblige them (believers) to obedience—to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another, and to distinguish them from those that are without." The *Confession of Faith* lays it down as the main end and object of the sacraments, to "represent Christ and His benefits, and to confirm our interest in Him." These statements most obviously teach that those who are entitled to partake of the sacraments have already been brought to have a personal interest in Christ, which they can only obtain by faith receiving Him and uniting to Him.

The most distinguished Scottish reformers and theologians insist strongly upon this view of the sacraments. Thus *Rutherford*, in his "DUE RIGHT OF PRESBYTERIES" says, "All believers as believers *in foro Dei*—before God, have right to the seals of the covenant. Those to whom the covenant, and the body of the church belongeth, to those the seal belongeth; but *in foro ecclesiastico*—and in an orderly church way, the seals are not to be conferred by the church upon persons because they believe, but because they profess the believing; therefore the apostles never baptized pagans but upon profession of their faith." Again, "certainly God ordaineth the sacraments to believers as believers, and because they are within the covenant; and their interest in the covenant is the only true right of interest to the seals of the covenant. Profession doth best declare who believe and who believe not, and consequently who have right to the seals of the covenant, and who not; but profession doth not make right, but declareth who have right." *Gillespie*, in his "AARON'S ROD BLOSSOMING," speaks of the sacraments as being "1. Significant or declarative signs — 2. Obsignative or confirming signs; and

* Rutherford's "Due Right of Presbyteries," p. 185 and 258.

3. Exhibitive signs—so that the thing signified is given or exhibited to the soul.” Speaking of the third use of the sacraments, he adds—“ Exhibition is not the giving of grace where it is not, but an exhibition to believers—a *real, effectual, lively application of Christ and of all His benefits, to every one that believeth*, for the *staying, strengthening, confirming, and comforting of the soul.*”* And *Boston*, in his “ MISCELLANY QUESTIONS ON DIVINITY ” declares—“ The sacraments are not converting, but confirming ordinances ; they are appointed for the use and benefit of God’s children, not of others ; they are given to believers as believers, so that none other are subjects capable of the same.”†

In whatever light we regard the sacraments, it is evident that peculiar qualifications are required in those who are admitted to partake of them. If they are viewed as symbolical and representative ordinances, their knowledge of the fundamental doctrines which they figuratively declare, and of the important facts which they symbolize is indispensable to those who receive them. If they are held out as seals of the covenant, this implies that those to whom they are administered are really in the covenant, as we cannot properly seal a blank, or confer gifts and privileges upon those whose names are not inscribed in the documents to which the seal is affixed. They cannot be means of strengthening and confirming grace to those who are not already in a gracious state. Nor can they possibly assure persons of benefits flowing through Christ, if they have not previously been united to Him by a living faith, or of their participation in the inheritance of saints in light, if they have not been incorporated with them into one body in Christ.

From all this, it is evident that the sacrament of the Supper should not be dispensed in a careless and perfunctory manner to all who desire to partake of it, or to persons simply on the ground of their assuming the Christian name, or of making some profession of religion. The indiscriminate admission of persons of all classes of character to sealing ordinances, so common in our day, has been justly said to be fraught with greater danger to the churches in these lands than the influx of Popish error, or the attacks of infidelity, as it openly dishonours Christ, profanes the most sacred mysteries, and tends

* Aaron’s Rod Blossoming, p. 496.

† Boston’s Works, Quest. vi.

to lull men in fatal delusion.* As the ordinance of the Supper holds forth a symbolical representation of the great truths of salvation through Christ, and is designed to be a full and open profession of faith in these doctrines, those who are *ignorant* or *scandalous* are plainly inadmissible to it. The faith which is to be exercised and strengthened must be intelligent, and fruitful in good works. Those who are called to partake of the Supper should have a competent knowledge of the great fundamental truths of the gospel. If they are unable to "*discern the Lord's body*, they can only eat and drink judgment to themselves." Infants and very young persons, not being capable of understanding divine mysteries, are justly excluded from the sacramental feast, even though there should be some evidence of the saving work of the Spirit being begun in them.† The reception of persons to sealing ordinances goes on the principle that, in the judgment of charity, they are believers in Christ, and have a conversation becoming the gospel. In the sight of the Master of the feast, those only are welcome guests who are friends of the Bridegroom—who "have oil in their vessels with their lamps," and who go forth to meet Him with their lamps trimmed. When the King comes in to see the guests, He detects in the thronged wedding chamber the single individual who is destitute of the wedding garment of His own righteousness, and sentences him to utter rejection and dread punishment. None but true believers are entitled in God's sight to partake of the Lord's Supper. By faith we enter into "the bond of the covenant," and, in consequence, have a right to its seal. Through the same grace, we are united to Christ—the vital Head of His body the Church, and are thereby fitted to have fellowship with Him and with His living members—saints on earth and in heaven. But even believers themselves may be unfit to partake of the seal of the covenant, and there are cases in which by coming to the feast of communion, they aggravate their sin, and can only incur the divine displeasure. Such an unsuitable state occurs when believers are in a decay

* Dr Wardlaw.

† Among some of the early corruptions of the Christian Church was the giving of the consecrated elements to infants. The plan which has recently been proposed by some among Dissenters in England, of originating "*Children's Churches*," and admitting to full fellowship to the Lord's Supper those who are in childhood and in early youth manifests much ignorance of the nature of a Christian profession, and of the Scriptural design and objects of the sacrament of the Supper.

of grace, are in a negligent, slothful condition—when they are living in the allowed commission of any known sin, however secret, or in the neglect of any commanded duty—in alienation of affection towards brethren, or cherishing enmity or malice against any—and when negligent of self-examination. The Lord's Supper is a feast of faith and love, and it can only be partaken of aright, when these graces are in lively exercise. The table of the Lord is holy, and those alone are bid welcome to it, who come with clean hands and pure hearts. As “Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us, we are to “keep the feast, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”* The injunction is positive and explicit—“Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.”†

Due preparation for the observance of the Lord's Supper requires us, on the one hand, to guard against manifold *dangers* to which Christians are exposed, and on the other, to seek a suitable frame of heart and mind for its observance. *Serious consideration* of the obligation, nature, and objects of the ordinances is required of all who engage in the sacramental service. The divine rule declared here is explicit—“I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.”‡ “He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”§ Diligent self-trial is so necessary to the right observance of the sacramental feast, that it is represented, both in the words of the original institution, and in the standards of the reformed churches as a principal and eminent part of the preparation of communion. ¶“Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.”|| In the “*Larger Catechism*,” in answer to the question, “How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to prepare themselves before they come to it”—it is said, “They are to prepare themselves thereunto by examining themselves of their being in Christ—of their sins and wants—of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance, love to God and the brethren, charity to all men—forgiving those that have done them wrong—of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by receiving the exercises of those graces, by serious meditation and fervent prayer.”¶ The work of self-examination is needful at all times, and, like spiritual

* 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

§ Heb. xi. 6.

† 1 Cor. xi. 28.

|| 1 Cor. xi. 28.

‡ Lev. x. 3.

¶ Question 171.

meditation, it should be associated with all religious duties, and it is specially incumbent upon those who propose to come to sealing ordinances. It is represented in Scripture, as "judging ourselves"—"communing with our hearts"—judging them before God at the tribunal of conscience; and making trial of their state, and of our actions by the rule of the divine word. Self-trial is a reflex act of the mind, by which we call to account our past life, and consider seriously the present state of our hearts, with the principles and ends of our actions. If we would essay this duty aright, we must set apart time for its due performance—retire from the world—seek in prayer direction and the aid of the Holy Spirit. We must aim to concentrate our thoughts, and to excite conscience to witness faithfully, and we must judge ourselves as before God, that we be not judged and condemned with the world.

Special self-examination as a preparation for the Lord's Supper, has respect to various important subjects, and each of these should form a separate and distinct matter of solemn inquiry. All right preparation for communicating in the sacrament of the Supper, consists of *habitual preparation*, in the possession of grace in the heart, and of *actual* preparation, in the present exercise of grace in the spirit and life. Having regard to this twofold preparation, our special self-trial for partaking of the Lord's Supper should, first of all, have respect to our *spiritual state*. We should earnestly inquire, as in the sight of Him who searches the heart, whether we have been spiritually enlightened, and savingly convinced of sin—whether we have been born again, and brought into a new covenant-relation to God, and whether we have been bringing forth the fruits of a living faith, penitence, love, meekness, and devoted obedience. We should examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, and give all diligence to ascertain our calling and election. Thus we may know and prove ourselves that Christ is in us, and that we are not reprobates.

Again, self-examination relates to our *frame of spirit*. It should take account of our sins and their aggravations—of our spiritual wants, of our end and design in coming to the sacramental feast, and especially of the exercise of holy graces in the soul. As preparatory to the observance of the ancient Passover, the Jews were enjoined under a severe penalty to search their houses for leaven, and to cast it out; so should we search and try our ways, and put away the "old leaven of

malice and wickedness."* And knowing the difficulty of detecting sins hidden in the heart, and the danger of indulging secret sin, we ought often to pray fervently—"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in Thy way everlasting."† In coming to the full and large provision of the covenant, we should seek to be sensible of our spiritual wants, that we may bring them to the source of gracious supply. A communion season is one in which the King, admits His people to the audience-chamber, and delights to hear and answer their requests. These we should aim to present particularly at the Throne of grace, looking up and expecting an answer. The Lord of the feast, in His matchless condescension, speaks to the weak and impoverished and helpless as did the king to Esther—"What is thy petition, and what is thy request, and it shall be granted." We should give definite expression to our felt necessities, not doubting that our covenant God is more ready to give than we are to ask; and that, for the glory of His name, He will do exceeding abundantly above all that we are able to ask or think. We should examine carefully *our ends* in coming to the sacramental feast. Whether we are prepared to offer a ready obedience to the Saviour's dying command; whether we cherish a loving, grateful remembrance of Him, and are prepared to show forth His death to God, to angels and fellow-saints, to the world and our own consciences—whether we design to enter anew into covenant with God in Christ—to have fellowship with His people, and to get grace in the heart increased, obtain foretastes of heaven, and to be quickened in the life of godliness.

This self-trial should have eminent respect to the spirit and graces which characterize the life of true religion in the soul. In the Assembly's *Shorter Catechism*, it is said to be required of communicants that they examine themselves of "their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon Him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience, lest coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves."‡ Not only competent knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and of the nature and ends of the Lord's Supper, is requisite in those who partake of it; they should, besides, possess a measure of saving, experimental knowledge of God

* 1 Cor. v. 7.

† Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

‡ Shorter Catechism, question 97.

in Christ—that which makes them become fools that they may be wise, and which is the essential element of life eternal. Communicants should specially examine themselves of their *faith* to appropriate Christ and salvation blessings. Without this grace in habit and exercise, we have no right to a feast which is prepared for the children of God, nor can we enjoy that fellowship with God which it is designed to exhibit, nor can we derive sanctifying and comforting virtue from it. The ordinance is eminently the feast of faith; designed for the exercise and invigoration of this leading grace of the Spirit, and in which true believers receive and realize “the end of their faith—even the salvation of their souls.” In examining themselves of their *faith*, believers may ascertain that it is saving, by its working by love, purifying the heart, and overcoming the world. By its exercise on its appropriate objects, it will be increased and strengthened, so as to realize things hoped for, and issue in the joyful assurance of future felicity. *Repentance unto life*,—the fruit of *faith*, is seen in the working of a contrite spirit, and in godly sorrow for sin. It is wrought in the heart by looking to the cross of Christ; and it brings forth its genuine fruits in holy hatred of sin, constant watchfulness, and turning from all iniquity. As the Passover of old was to be “eaten with bitter herbs,” so evangelical repentance is indispensably required as an essential part of the preparation for coming to the sacred Supper. When we duly partake of it, all the emotions of true penitence will be the more excited into lively and habitual exercise. In examining concerning our *love*, we should see that it be supreme towards God—that we have complacential delight in His saints—“the excellent of the earth,” and the love of benevolence towards all men, and that we have desires of heart after the word and ordinances, and acquiescence in the way of divine leading in providence. The *new obedience*, about which we should finally inquire, is that which *faith* in Christ produces, and to which the love of Christ constrains us. It springs from a new heart which is created in us by the Spirit of God; it arises from new principles in the heart—the fear and love of God; it is regulated by a new rule—the law of God; and it is directed to a new end—the glory of God. Its language is—“All the commandments of my God, I purpose to obey.” “I will run the way of Thy precepts, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.” Walking in this course of holy obedience, we obtain evidence of fitness

for peculiar privileges in the church on earth, and we acquire meetness for the heavenly inheritance. "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." "Where I am, there shall also My servant be : if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."*

If the result of self-examination appears discouraging, it concerns those who propose to observe the Lord's Supper to come, according to the call of the gospel, *just as they are unto God through Christ, the Mediator.* Their first duty is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, and they should seek the Holy Spirit to work in them saving faith and true repentance. They have certainly the warrant and welcome to embrace the invitation and promise ; and to accept of Christ as the Prophet, Priest and King in the covenant, and as the Author of eternal salvation to them that obey Him. He ever holds out the gracious encouragement — "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out."† "Turn ye at my reproof ; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you ; I will make known my words unto you."‡ In the case of believers themselves, self-trial, even when prayerfully performed, may not at times yield comfort and encouragement in going to the Lord's table. Through constitutional temperament, from the power of indwelling sin, and from the temptations of Satan, their views may be clouded, and the evidences of a gracious state and frame may not be clear. Believers themselves are at times the "children of light walking in darkness." The immediate duty of souls in this case is to come anew to Christ, as they came at first. They should "trust in the name of the Lord, and stay themselves upon their God."§ They should "go to the altar of God"—"unto God, their exceeding joy"—and expositing with their own hearts because of fears and discouragements, they should exercise believing confidence and hope—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? Why art thou dismayed within me ? Hope in God ; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

The duty and privilege of those who, after self-examination, are yet downcast and discouraged, are comprehensively stated in the *Large Catechism*, question 172—"May one who doubteth

* John xv. 14 ; xii. 26 ; Rev. xxii. 14.

‡ Isa. l. 10.

† John vi. 37 ; Prov. i. 23.

§ Ps. lxii. 5.

of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's Supper?" Ans.—"One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not assured thereof, and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity, in which use (because promises are made, and the sacrament is appointed for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians), he is to bewail his unbelief, and labour to have his doubts resolved; and so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened." A proper consideration of those judicious statements, and ready compliance with this eminently wise counsel, may, under the divine counsel, go far to remove the darkness and fears of doubting believers, and to conduct them to comfortable communion in the Lord's Supper.

After self-examination, we should approach the sacramental feast, in the renewed exercise of holy graces—with much fervent prayer—and in the way of personal covenanting. Coming to an ordinance that is designed to exhibit the great object which the graces of the Spirit apprehend and rest upon, it is befitting that these should be excited into lively exercise in the actual preparation for its observance. The virgins that go forth to meet the Bridegroom are not only required to have the oil of grace in their vessels, but also to have lamps trimmed, if they would be admitted to the wedding-chamber. Called to the feast of love, we should be able to say—"Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love."*

Importunate prayer is the chief expression of grace in the heart—the grand evidence of the vigour of spiritual life—and the appointed way of enjoying all blessing. The whole way of approach to the ordinance of the Supper is opened to us by the effusion of the Spirit of grace and supplication. Thus we look upon Him whom we have pierced and mourn. Communion with God is maintained by offering petitions for spiritual blessings, receiving answers, and returning praises for benefits received. Our Lord, when instituting the Supper, set apart the elements and performed the whole service by prayer; and at the close, He offered "the grand priestly prayer" for all His true disciples,—designed to be the sample of his continual and

* Song ii. 5.

prevailing intercession. It is only in a prayerful spirit—pouring out our hearts to God, that we can come with acceptance before Him; by intermingling devout petitions with all the exercises at the communion table, and committing the whole service to God for a blessing, we may alone expect to enjoy the high privileges which the ordinance is designed to confer. Acts of *personal dedication or covenanting* are not only an essential part of the sacramental service, but they form also an eminent preparation for engaging in it. At an early period of the Presbyterian Reformation in Scotland and in the north of Ireland, we are told that it was usual for an aged elder, in examining candidates for church-fellowship, to inquire whether they knew what *personal covenanting* was; and their fitness or unfitness was judged of by the explicit answer that was returned. To come aright to the Lord's table, individuals must take hold of God's covenant, and yield themselves to the Lord. After self-examination and prayer, they should make deliberate and particular vows to renounce evil, and to be the Lord's. These sacred engagements should be carried with them to the King's presence, and renewed in His presence under the most solemn sanctions. When the Spirit is plentifully poured out, "One shall say, I am the Lord's." As Israel and Judah go up weeping to Zion, they say, "Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten."* They only who take hold of God's covenant, join themselves to the Lord to serve Him—and these, it is promised, "shall be made joyful in His house of prayer, and their offerings and burnt-offerings shall be accepted on His altar."†

* Isa. xliv. 3; Jer. 1. 5.

† Isa. lvi. 7.

CHAPTER VII.

EXERCISES OF COMMUNICANTS IN PARTAKING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE service at the sacred feast, to which all that has been already said is only preparatory, is one of the most solemn and important of our holy religion. It embodies in it many of the chief duties of Christianity ; and as provided for those who are of the household of faith, it constitutes in various aspects the highest privileges which they are called to partake of on earth. The religious exercises, connected with the due observance of sacramental Supper are so weighty and diversified, and the cases of those who engage in them are so various that it is difficult in a brief space to present a condensed view of them, so as to supply a suitable directory and encouragement to those who purpose to commemorate the love of Christ and to show forth His death. Our venerable Westminster Divines in the "*Larger Catechism*" present a comprehensive summary of the spiritual exercises of mind and religious duties, which constitute a right observance of the ordinance of the Supper. In answer to question 173, "What is required of them that partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in the time of the administration of it ?" they say, "It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention, they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, affectionately meditate on His death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces, in judging themselves and sorrowing for sin, in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feasting on Him by faith, receiving of His fulness, trusting in His merits, rejoicing in His love, and giving thanks for His grace."

Having regard to the different particulars thus lucidly stated, and to other views which the ordinance of the Supper holds out, the exercises suitable to partaking of it may be noticed —as consisting in a *composed spiritual frame of mind and medi-*

tation—special self-examination—due consideration of the sacramental elements, words, and actions—the exercise of holy graces in communicating—solemn vowed and resignation, etc.

I.—SPIRITUAL FRAME AND MEDITATION.

A composed spiritual frame of mind should be sought and cherished when attending upon the duties that are immediately connected with the administration of this ordinance. The discourse that precedes, should, both in the matter and manner, be such as to promote spirituality of thought and feeling ; and the other preparatory services should be all helpful to the same object. In attending upon these, we should ask the aid of the Spirit, that the mind may be restrained from wandering, vain thoughts, and that the affections may be concentrated on things spiritual and heavenly. It is required of us to mix faith in the way of self-application and appropriation with the word preached. We are called to the enjoyment of all spiritual blessings, as we sit in heavenly places with Christ. The Beloved does not come into His garden to gather and eat His pleasant fruits, until the Spirit, in His quickening, purifying, and refreshing influences, blow upon the garden, and the spices flow forth.* Meditation, which consists in fixed thoughts, with corresponding spiritual affections, is so necessary, that it forms an indispensable part of the service at the communion feast ; and is to be viewed as inseparable from all the other exercises. To be enabled to meditate profitably on the great subjects exhibited in the sacrament, we should seek the Holy Spirit to aid in presenting divine truth to the mind, and to help us to contemplate it steadfastly. In general, spiritual meditation is profitable, when the thoughts are fixed on one subject at once, till the heart be affected, and is moved to godly sorrow or love, or to prayer and praise. As we approach the Lord's table, we should meditate on the evil of sin, and our condition as sinners —on the amazing love of God in the plan of human redemption, and the gift of His Son—on the person, offices, and death of Christ—on the causes, nature, and ends of His sufferings, and our own personal interest in them ; and, in devout meditation, we should consider the character, obligations, and blessedness of God's people. When fully engaged in it, and when the Spirit is given in answer to prayer, the thoughts are

* Song iv. 16.

concentrated and elevated, and the desires and affections become ardent and heavenly. "My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord."* "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib."†

2. Special *self-examination* is another of the exercises of accepted guests at the sacramental table. Besides the introspection which enters into the whole Christian life, and which forms an essential preparation for the observance of the sacrament of the Supper, there should be much self-trial at the time and in the act of communicating. This is implied in the prescription of the institution—"Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." The solemn injunction plainly teaches that those alone are warranted to eat, who have examined themselves, so as to ascertain their title and warrant; and that this self-trial is to be carried forward to the very act of partaking. To guard against all self-deception, and know our personal invitation to the feast, our title to its high privileges, and our meetness for their enjoyment, we should, as in the immediate presence of the All-seeing Judge, "search and try our ways and turn to the Lord"—and "lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens."‡ As intimately connected with the institution of this ordinance, and an essential part of the service, we are admonished—"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."§ Our spiritual profit and consolation are closely associated with severe self-scrutiny. Disarming our title clear to the covenant provision, we admire and rejoice in the Father's love. The invitation, bidding us welcome to the banquet of wine, is addressed to us. We sit with great delight under the shade of the apple-tree, and His fruit is sweet to our taste. And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. "Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."||

3. Due solemn consideration of the *sacramental elements, words and actions*. The material elements as they are presented to our senses, to be seen, handled and used, are designed to instruct us in heavenly mysteries; and the words and actions that accompany the distribution, add the most weighty impression to the instruction communicated. Faith exercised in the word is enlightening, sanctifying and saving;

* Ps. civ. 34.

§ 1 Cor. xi. 31.

† Song vi. 12.

|| 1 John iii. 2.

‡ Lam. iii. 40, 41.

and the actions in giving and receiving the elements in the Supper are ordained, in order to confirm and ratify the divine offer and promise. The sacrament is properly the word embodied in the living action ; and hence the importance and necessity of having right spiritual views of every thing that is said and done in the administration. A principal way of *discerning the Lord's body*, and of thus communicating worthily, is to mark carefully the sacramental elements, words and actions, and to contemplate them by faith, as glasses through which we see the wondrous provision of the covenant—and beholding the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord.* When the elements of bread and wine are presented, we should meditate devoutly on the grand spiritual provision, which they symbolically represent—Christ's body and blood offered as the spiritual food and nourishment of the soul.

The *taking* of these elements by the minister holds forth Christ willingly assuming our nature, that He might be one with His brethren, and that He might obey and suffer in their stead. The *giving of thanks* in setting apart these elements shows the free willingness of the Saviour in His surety-undertaking. From the heart, He gave thanks that He had the debt of human obedience unto death to pay, and that He had all ability to pay it. The *breaking of the bread*, and the *pouring out of the cup*, symbolize Christ's body broken, and His blood shed as an atoning victim, in the name of the guilty. We should, in witnessing these actions, meditate on the Redeemer's vicarious suffering—on His matchless love in submitting to them—on our sins as the procuring cause of them, and the important ends for which they were endured. The *giving of the elements* to communicants, with the free offer and invitation accompanying the action, is designed to remind us of the infinite love of the Father in the gift of His well-beloved Son, of the Saviour in giving Himself as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and in offering Himself as the life of the soul—and of the condescension and grace of the Holy Spirit in applying Christ and His benefits as the food and salvation of our souls. In *receiving* the elements—eating the bread and drinking the wine—it concerns us, in a special manner, to have faith in exercise, appropriating Christ in His Surety—obedience and sufferings, as the food and life of

* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

our souls ; and we should seek to have desire and love excited, that we may realize the blessing of union to Christ, and the sweetness of communion with Him in His ordinances. The handing of the elements, after partaking, by communicants to one another, is a symbolical action expressive of the communion of saints. It declares, in the most explicit and affecting manner, our own reliance on the sufferings and merits of the Saviour for all blessing, our commanding Him from our own experience to fellow-believers, and our earnest desire that they may share with us in the benefits of the covenant. While attending devoutly to all the sacramental actions and words, communicants should cherish in every part the humble, grateful, loving remembrance of Christ ; and to God, angels, fellow-saints, and their own consciences, as well as to the world around, they should show forth His death, as the sure ground of all their confidence, hope, and triumph. Thus the elements, and actions and words in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, when duly regarded, become, even to the weakest believer, important means of vividly presenting and bringing near the grand provision of the eternal covenant for His salvation, and of drawing his heart to rest and rejoice in it.*

4. *Communion* in the exercise of holy graces, is a chief and eminent part of the sacramental service. The communion enjoyed by believers in the Lord's Supper, is realized in God communicating to His people through the symbols of bread and wine, the principal benefits of the covenant. United to Christ as their Head and Husband, He gives them to know "the love of espousals," and admits them to share in all the privileges of the Marriage Feast. There is cleared up to them their right to Christ and all His purchased blessings, and they are bid welcome to all the entertainment of the Father's house. As the Beloved comes into His prepared garden, they are greeted with His joy-inspiring invitation—"Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."† Communion in the ordinance on our part consists, not so much in meditating on Christ's love and suffering, or in offering prayer for blessings that we need, or in personal covenanting—it rather lies in the cordial acceptance of Christ and His purchased benefits, sealed and applied to us in the sacrament. We are warranted to believe, that the broken body and shed blood of

* See Maestricht—Theol. Pract.—*De Cœna Sacra*, §§ xi., xii.

† Song v. 1.

the Saviour, are as certainly presented for the salvation of our souls, as the bread and wine, of which we partake in the sacramental feast, go to strengthen and refresh our bodies. It is here that graces implanted by the Spirit are drawn forth into lively exercise. Flowing from the love of God, and the fulness of Christ, they are rendered back to the blessed Benefactor in the tribute of heartfelt gratitude and devoted obedience. As the heart is opened to the Beloved, when He stands and knocks, He graciously comes in to share with His people in the feast which He Himself provides, and they eat with Him and He with them. We exercise faith while partaking of the Supper, by looking to Christ lifted up on the cross for healing—in embracing and appropriating Him as our Redeemer and Portion—in pleading His merits for pardon and acceptance—and in yielding ourselves wholly to Him, to be guided, ruled, and saved by Him. We come in the spirit of genuine penitents, by calling our sins to remembrance, as having pierced the Saviour—by loathing and condemning ourselves—and by putting away sin with detestation and abhorrence. In communion in the Supper, love to Christ is exercised in fervent desire after more intimate fellowship—in the outgoings of the heart in wonder and admiration—in delighting in Him as the chief good, and an all-sufficient Portion—and in earnest longings for full conformity to Him, and for the perfect vision and full enjoyment of Him. And receiving the atonement, we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ—rejoicing in Him as “the portion of our inheritance and cup”—and in the blessed hope of His glory.

Lastly—*Solemn Vowing and Personal Covenanting* are important parts of the service of the Lord's Supper. The ordinance brings into view the special arrangements of the covenant of grace, and makes a rich display of its gracious provision and manifold benefits. The bread given symbolizes the bread of life provided—the wine represents the blood of the covenant. We come in the feast to the Mediator of the New Covenant; the wedding garment—the ground of our acceptance is the righteousness of the covenant; and all the benefits offered and received are the abundant blessings of the covenant. In the sacrament we receive these by taking hold of the covenant by faith, and yielding ourselves to the Lord. The covenant of privilege becomes a covenant of duty. Accepting of Christ, as given “for a covenant of the

people," we surrender ourselves and all that concerns us to the Lord, engaging in His strength to be wholly His—to obey, submit to and delight in Him as our Saviour God and Portion for ever. Such personal covenanting impliest he renunciation of ourselves, and of all dependence on works of the law—of the devil, the world, and the flesh—and full acceptance of the provision of the gospel. We take God the Father to be our God and Father in the covenant—the Son to be our Saviour, Prophet, Priest, and King—the Holy Spirit to be our Teacher, Sanctifier, and Guide—and God in Trinity to be our sure and all-sufficient Portion ; and we engage, in the strength of promised grace, to walk in the ways of new obedience, and to be wholly and for ever the Lord's. Vowing in the Lord's Supper, made under the most solemn sanctions, by means of the symbols of the atonement of Christ, should embrace an explicit recognition and renewal of our baptismal covenant—of former acts of personal dedication—and of more public federal engagements, whether those of office and membership in the church, or those of the church and the nation, which, as entered into by godly ancestors on behalf of posterity, equally with themselves, are acknowledged to be resting upon us in all the plenitude of moral obligation. These vows, based on the stipulations of the covenant of redemption, are made in the strength promised, and with sole dependence upon covenant help for their performance. Rejoicing that we are privileged to enter into them, we feel that we can only be faithful to the solemn engagements by direction and strength from on high. In personally covenanting at the Lord's table, the believer joyfully confesses the high privilege of self-dedication, and the obligation to thanksgiving and praise which it imposes. "Thy vows are upon me, O God ; I will render praise unto Thee."* Like the pious monarch of Israel, he "rejoices because of the oath." The most appropriate conclusion of the sacramental service—so full and momentous—is the surrender of ourselves and of all that we have essayed, to God for pardon and acceptance, and a blessing. While our hearts should be filled with gratitude, and our mouths should utter the high praises of the King, we should conclude the service with fervent prayer. As did one of Scotland's covenanted daughters, we should be able to record—"I put my engagement into the Saviour's hands, to perform my part of the covenant as well as His

* Ps. lvi. 20.

own." While we praise His manifest goodness and mercy, we are encouraged to plead in connexion with acts of solemn self-surrender, "Thy God hath commended thy strength; strengthen, O God, that which Thou hast wrought for us." "Thou hast delivered my soul from death. Wilt Thou not deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?" *

* Ps. lxxviii. 28 ; lvi. 13.

CHAPTER VIII.

IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNICATING IN THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND ITS FRUITS.

THE enjoyment of spiritual privileges lays us under peculiar obligations to abound in gratitude and in works of holy obedience. “Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required ; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”* This rule, in relation to responsibility in things human and temporal, illustrates our higher accountability in respect to spiritual privileges and duties, arising from our relation to God. The evidence to ourselves and others, that we have come with acceptance to the sacramental feast, and that we have derived spiritual benefit from it, will be apparent in the improvement which we afterwards make of the favour we have received in admission to the Lord’s table, and in the fruit which we bring forth to the glory of Him who has conferred upon us the blessing. In general, it may be said of those who are hypocritical in their profession, and formalists, that their chief concern is to attend upon the outward observance of the sacrament, and to busy themselves about preparation for it ; and after partaking of it, to be indifferent to any proper improvement. Speedily, after coming down from the hill of communion, their frame of mind becomes cold and lifeless—the edge of duties is blunted—they give way to besetting sin—and they relapse into their former course of carnal and unprofitable living. Those, on the other hand, who have been really brought to the Banqueting House, and have partaken of the feast of the Saviour’s love, are rendered more humble, prayerful, and tender in their walk ; and a deep sense of the privileges they have enjoyed, with the blessing promised which comes to crown the service, tends to make them more devoted, and fruitful in every good word and work.

The IMPROVEMENT to be made by those who have partaken of the Lord’s Supper is succinctly and clearly stated by the Westminster Divines in the *Larger Catechism*.† “The

* Luke xii. 48.

† Question 175.

duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament or the Lord's Supper, is seriously to consider how they have behaved themselves therein, and with what success ; if they find quickening and comfort to bless God for it, by the continuance of it, watch against relapses, fulfil their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance : but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to and carriage at the sacrament ; in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time ; but, if they see they have failed in either, they are to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterwards with more care and diligence."

I. SELF-EXAMINATION.—The immediate duty required, after coming away from the communion feast, is the same as that which formed a main part of the preparation in going to partake of it. We should examine ourselves whether we have embraced the offer and promise, and appropriated spiritual blessings in faith ; and whether our faith has been increased and strengthened by attendance upon the ordinance. It is most suitable that, on coming down from the mount of privilege, we should seek retirement, spread out before God the whole service in which we have been engaged, and take a strict account, as in His sight, of the frame of spirit in which we performed the duty—of the benefits we have derived from it—of our present spiritual condition, and of the new obligations under which we have been brought to lively gratitude and to all holy living. Justly has it been said, that serious self-examination is as requisite *after* the enjoyment of sacred ordinances, as in seeking access to them. We will undeniably be judged hereafter according to our light and privileges ; and if we would not be condemned with the world, we must inspect our spiritual condition and attainments in connexion with the solemn profession which we have made, and the spiritual privileges to which we have been admitted. Our Lord, on the night in which He was betrayed, immediately after He had partaken with His disciples the Passover, and eaten with them the newly-instituted feast of the Supper, addressed to them the searching inquiry—“*Do you now believe?*”*—thus intimating that they should carefully consider whether they had partaken of the fruit of His love and faith ; and that their whole duty and privilege lay on living by faith on His person and work. It is only by

* John xvi. 31.

proper self-trial, that we are preserved from self-deception—in being satisfied with an outward profession and the excitement of natural feelings, instead of a real change of heart and a holy character. Thus too, will we be humbled and penitent, on account of the sins of our holy things, and our manifold defects in communicating—become duly thankful for the Lord's gracious benefits, and be preserved from many of the distressing doubts and perplexities with which believers themselves are frequently assailed after partaking of this holy ordinance. We should examine ourselves carefully in relation to the state of our hearts in partaking of the sacred feast—to the exercise of grace at the time, to our ends and aims, and to the dispositions which we cherish in coming away from the ordinance, whether they be those which characterize humble penitents, and children who have been in their Father's presence, and have received from Him special favour, and are under renewed obligations to walk before Him in love unto all well-pleasing. This self-examination, after communicating, should have special regard to the Lord's dealings with us, and to the distinction between the children of God, and those who are formal in their profession, and hypocritical in heart and life. If we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and been made sensible of His covenant love towards us, we shall be “satisfied with the goodness of His holy place,” and our “souls shall be filled as with marrow and fatness.” Knowing that we are not hypocrites, we shall delight ourselves in the Lord. Rejoicing in Him as our rest and sure portion, and constrained by His love, we shall learn to live henceforth not to ourselves, but to Him who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. The clearing up of our title to the inheritance of sons, will lead us, having this hope, to purify ourselves as God is pure;—while the discovery of sinful defects and provocations in our best services, will deepen our humility and godly sorrow for sin, and teach us the unspeakable value of Christ's atoning blood to cleanse us, and the indispensable necessity of constant reliance upon His grace and strength for the right performance of solemn vows. This self-examination is the primary duty of those who have been at the Lord's table ; and the more conscientiously and seriously it is engaged in, may the effects be expected to be the more salutary and encouraging.

2. We should be concerned to maintain a devout frame of heart and spirit in coming from the Lord's Supper.

In secret, we should ponder before God our solemn privileges and vows—supplicate earnestly the aid and operation of the Spirit, and seek that He would keep “in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart,” what we have seen and heard and enjoyed. Spiritual frames are frequently evanescent; and only in the way of holy vigilance and much prayer are they maintained, so as to give spiritual peace and consolation. The frame suitable to those who have been at the sacramental feast is one of *admiration* and *thanksgiving* and *rejoicing*. We should come down from the mount of communion filled with wonder at the love of God towards us, which is displayed in the ordinance; and at the grace and condescension of Christ, in taking us into covenant and communion with Himself, and in giving us the seal and earnest of the heavenly inheritance. A grateful, thankful spirit is eminently befitting those who have been made partakers of Christ—God’s unspeakable gift, and of the sealed benefits of His covenant. We should joy in God in Trinity as our God and portion for ever—in His glorious perfections—in the Redeemer’s undertaking, sufferings and triumph—and in the way of God in grace and providence. We go to “the altar of God”—and to God as our “exceeding joy”—and with hearts lifted up in His ways, we sing with gladness great in Zion—“everlasting joy” as a chaplet “upon our heads,” and “sorrow and sighing” having “fled away.” The spirit of heartfelt *humility* is becoming such as have realized the presence of Christ in His ordinance, and have been with Him in the holy mount. If we have been brought near into His presence—have seen His face, and received blessing from His hands, we will be humbled under a sense of our own vileness—of our want of due preparation—of the imperfection and sin of our near approaches to God in this ordinance—the coldness of our affections, and our inadequate apprehension of the great things of God’s glory and our salvation. The “goodness of God” should “lead us to repentance”—and, in proportion as we are made partakers of the great blessings of redemption, will we be humbled to the dust, under the sense of God’s wondrous grace, and our own manifold unworthiness. Like David, when there was revealed to him God’s purpose of love, and there were given to him assurances of future blessing, we should exclaim with admiration—“Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my father’s house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto? Is this the manner of

man, O Lord God?"* Or, as Jacob, when he declared—"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant."† Furthermore, a *watchful* frame is especially required of those who have enjoyed privilege and blessing in the sacrament. We need to watch against trusting on the sacrament, and confiding in our vows and resolutions. We should guard against the devices of Satan, and temptations to heart-wanderings, spiritual pride, and undue worldly cares—the risings of unmortified passions—and all spiritual sloth and formality in religion. A spirit of constant holy vigilance is ever needed, if we would be active and steadfast in holy obedience—if we would be preserved from leaning on our own strength, and be found looking to Christ for quickening influence, and be prepared for His coming. It is related of *Christian* in the "PILGRIM'S PROGRESS," that, through want of watchfulness, his feet frequently slipped as he came down from the mount; and this was the precursor of the terrible encounter which he had in the Valley of Humiliation, and of the terrors that encompassed him in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Finally, we should be distinguished by a *charitable, obedient, and heavenly frame of spirit*, as we go down from the sacramental feast. If we have leant on Christ's bosom, as we sat at meat at His table, we cannot but love one another, as His true disciples. We must, at the same time, manifest the love of benevolence toward all men, such as He commands and enforces by His perfect example. Our sacred vows bind us to all holy obedience. As "bought with a price," we are not our own; we should therefore "glorify God with our bodies and spirits, which are His." With hearts enlarged, we should "run the way of His precepts."‡ And if the communion-feast has been to us "a heavenly place," where we were with Jesus, we should learn the more to have our treasure and our hearts in heaven—to set our affections on things in heaven and not on things on earth—to seek continually the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God—and to "wait for the Son from heaven, even Jesus, who hath delivered us from the wrath to come."§ Such a frame is becoming our high profession, and is attractive. Thus, our faces shine, as Moses' did, when we descend from the

* 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19.

† 1 Cor. vi. 20; Ps. cxix. 32.

‡ Gen xxxii. 10.

§ Col. iii. 2; 1 Thes. i. 10.

mount of communion. Thus may others take notice of us that we have been with Jesus.

3. A renewed *holy, vigorous walk* is distinctive of those who are accepted and who receive spiritual benefit in the ordinance of the Supper. The grand evidence of "gracious affections"—or of a true work of grace in the heart is, as President Edwards says, "*Consistent godly practice.*"* This may be expected ever to flow from the right observance of the Lord's Supper. If spiritual graces have been enlarged and strengthened, this will be shown in the vigorous performance of the duties of new obedience. Our sacramental vows, when their obligation is duly felt, will constrain us to more devoted service. And the fellowship which we have had with the Redeemer in the ordinance, and the views which we have enjoyed of His glory, cannot but constrain us to yield ourselves to Him, and to aim to glorify Him with our bodies and spirits, which are His. The improvement that follows the worthy partaking of the Lord's Supper is manifested in the whole course of the life, and in every part of the outward conduct. Our conversation is such as "becomes the gospel of Christ." We "walk worthy of God unto all well pleasing. "Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to things before," we "press to the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ."† A quickened course of holy obedience is seen in walking according to the rule of the Word—in growing conformity to the perfect example of Christ—in a lively and abiding sense of sacramental vows and engagements—improving them to guard us against temptations, and to enliven us in the performance of all duties ; and in labouring to lead lives suited to spiritual views of Christ's love and sufferings, and of the preciousness of His salvation which we had in the sacrament—to the gracious benefits which we received—and to the blessings which were promised and sealed to us in the ordinance. All the service which we rendered, as well as all the privileges which we enjoyed, should convey to us the most solemn and impressive warning of the danger of decay and lukewarmness, and of the evil of backsliding and apostacy. Knowing that the spiritual benefits conferred in the ordinance are all of sovereign free grace, we learn to entertain lowly thoughts of ourselves, and to watch against all self-confidence. Our highest privilege is to draw near to God, our greatest interest is to live always in nearest communion

* Edward's on *Religious Affections*—Mark xii.

† Phil. iii. 13, 14.

with Christ, as our leading desire should be to have experimental acquaintance with His power and love, in all gracious relations, and in all work and trial. A holy walk—quickened by coming to the sacramental feast, leads to constant dependence upon the Redeemer for guidance, support and perfection, and is characterized by increasing vigour and activity to the end. He only can hold up our goings, and lead us in His paths divine. Drawing refreshment from “the wells of salvation,” we “go on from strength to strength unweariedly, till we appear before the Lord in Zion.” Waiting on the Lord, “we renew our strength; we mount up as the pinions of eagles; we run and are not weary, we walk and are not faint.”*

The fruits of precious communion seasons are excellent and manifold. The grand concern of the Husbandman about the living branches of the true vine, is not only that they may be fruit-bearing, but also that they may *continually increase in fruit*. They abide in Christ, and He abides in them, and thus they bring forth much fruit.† He “purges” or prunes them by His Word and Spirit, and by afflictive providences, that they may bring forth more fruit.‡ The glory of the Father, the Head of the New Covenant—the clearing of their own evidences of true discipleship, are eminently promoted by the increase of the fruits of holiness. “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.”§ The gracious fruits that have flowed from the pure administration and the faithful observance of the Lord’s Supper have, in all past times, been abundant and most valuable. It may be safely affirmed, that no other ordinance of our holy religion has been productive of more important consequences to all concerned in its observance. The fruits of acceptance and blessing in the sacrament are seen in their relation to Christ—the Institutor and Master of the feast—to the church and the individual believer, who was a guest at the Marriage Supper. The glory of the Saviour is displayed in the whole administration—in His person, offices, and atoning work—in His presence in the church—and exaltation to heaven. Those who have seen His glory, as they were with Him in the holy mount, go from the ordinance, animated with the desire and prepared as instruments to promote His glory throughout the world. As dedicated ones, they are “constrained” to live to Him alone; and all the fruit which they bear redounds to the honour of Him

* Isa. xl. 31. † John xv. 5. ‡ John xv. 2. § John xv. 8.

who has called them. The church, in all past ages, has been greatly benefited and blessed through her sacramental feasts. The great doctrines which constitute her life and nourishment have been thereby more clearly seen of men, and prayerfully applied. Her unity, harmony, and spiritual fellowship have been promoted. She has walked in "the light of the Lord;" and instead of being termed "forsaken and desolate," her name has been *Beulah*—married—"Hephzibah"—my delight is in her. She has become as "an orchard of pleasant plants, and as a garden that the Lord hath blessed." The lovely picture of luxuriant fruit-bearing of every kind, contained in Hosea xiv. 5-7, has been already realized in seasons of spiritual blessing upon sacramental solemnities, and will yet be far more generally known in the future promised era of light and prosperity for Zion. "I will be as the dew unto Israel : he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return ; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine : the scent thereof shall be as the vine of Lebanon." *

The fruits of the blessing upon the sacrament of the Supper to individual believers are manifested by *increased spirituality in heart and life*. To themselves, "to be spiritually minded is life and peace." To others with whom they have intercourse, it becomes a powerful moulding influence, by which they are attracted to religion, and are often brought to feel its power. They take knowledge of believers that they have been with Jesus, and adhering to them they say—"We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." The due observance of sacramental feasts has ever proved an eminent means of preparation of the church for enlarged service and blessing, and for enduring suffering for the truth's sake. Israel kept the Passover on the eve of forsaking Egypt and beginning their march to the Land of Promise ; and they again celebrated it as they passed forth from the wilderness and entered the Promised Land. Who can doubt that, in the one case, they were thereby prepared for enjoying the wondrous deliverance, and strengthened for the trials of the wilderness ; and that in the other, they were endued with boldness and courage for encountering the wars of Canaan, and were fitted to realize the blessings of a covenanted inheritance ? The

* Hosea xiv. 5-7.

† Gal. v. 22-25 ; Eph. v. 9.

frequent observance of the Lord's Supper in the apostolic age, and in that immediately following, contributed largely to the remarkable spread of Christianity, and to the rich harvest of souls connected with it, and was likewise the most suitable for preparation for times of scattering and martyrdom. The like experience of plenteous spiritual fruits to the church, resulting from blessed communion seasons, has been known in subsequent times—as at the era of the Reformation in different countries—in the covenanting and martyr periods in Scotland, and during the ministry of Livingstone, Blair, and others, in the north of Ireland, in the early part of the seventeenth century.

These fruits are seen in *active Christian benevolence*. Like the primitive Christians, after the effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost, believers accepted at the Lord's Supper, learn to do good to all men as they have opportunity. Nothing that they have, either of temporal or spiritual good, do they esteem as their own. All they regard as given to them in stewardship, to be held and used only for the honour of the best of Masters, and for the benefit of His cause and people in the world. The appropriate tribute of thanksgiving for mercies received—the grand business of their life is to be “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord”—assured that “their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.” They learn to rejoice in spending and being spent in the service of Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. While they have the honour and great reward of serving Christ, they are a blessing in the earth. Life, and its opportunities, are felt to be valuable, and full of bright and lofty interest; and the close is gladdened with joy-inspiring prospects and hopes.

In fine, the precious fruits of a happy communion season are *all the mellow fruits of the Spirit*, ripening to the blessed harvest of life eternal. They are love and its fruits, growing and flourishing on earth, to be fully brought forth and ripened in the heavenly state. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.” “The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness and truth.” “Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”* How important and excellent, to the church,

* Gal. v. 22-24; Eph. v. 9; Rom. vi. 22.

and to the individual, an ordinance which is productive of so rich and abundant blessings! May not such as have enjoyed it, say of it, as did the spies to Moses, when they presented the large clusters of grapes of Canaan. “We came into the land, whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it.”*

* Num. xiii. 27.

* * * The *Duties* incumbent on us after partaking of the holy communion and the frame of spirit in which they are rightly performed, are clearly and succinctly stated in Maestricht—*De Coena Sacra*, § xxxi.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ORDINANCE OF THE SUPPER IN THE MILLENNIAL STATE, AND AT THE REDEEMER'S SECOND COMING.

It may serve to show the value and excellency of sealing ordinances to consider their observance in the future glorious state of the church on earth, and the blissful ends for which they were instituted, as they are fully realized in the state of heavenly felicity. As the light of the early dawn is seen in its glory when it has merged into the effulgence of noon-tide, so the sacraments of the New Testament will be enjoyed in their full measure of comfort and blessing, when the Redeemer's kingdom shall be universally established in the earth ; and their great ends will be perfectly reached in His glorious reign in eternity. The sacrament of the Supper especially will, in all the parts of its observance, appear fraught with manifold blessing in the last period of the gospel dispensation ; and when it and other means of grace shall cease at the full introduction of the eternal estate, their unspeakable value will be known in the perfection of happiness to which they conduct the heirs of salvation.

The excellence and glory of the sacrament of the Supper may be considered in a *twofold* aspect in relation to the future.
1. In the Millennial State of the Church on Earth. 2. At Christ's Second Coming.

I. THE MILLENNIAL STATE OF THE CHURCH.

The Scriptures, in many passages, both of the Old and New Testaments, plainly testify that the last period of the church on earth will be one of great enlargement and privilege. The truth shall have spread throughout the earth. The knowledge of Christianity will be universal. The boundaries of the church will be co-extensive with the ends of the earth. Systems of superstition and idolatry and of civil oppression will be subverted. The Jews will be converted, and all Israel saved, and

the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in. “The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one.” “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.”* When the gospel of the kingdom shall have been preached for a witness to all nations—when, by revolutions throughout the nations, and the destruction of the ungodly, wicked, idolatrous and oppressive systems shall be overthrown; and by the power of the Word, and the outpouring of the Spirit, great multitudes shall be converted to Christ, the visible kingdom of the Redeemer will be universally established. All opposing power and authority shall be put down. The Mediator having shaken “the heavens and the earth,” shall remove the thrones of the kingdoms. He will take Him His great power to reign. The nations of the earth shall bring their glory and riches to Zion. Kings shall be “nursing fathers, and their queens nursing mothers” to the church. The “mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills,” and “nations shall flow into it.”† The saints who suffered for Christ and His cause, will rise, in the revival of their principles and spirit, and reign with Him a thousand years.‡ The testimony which they held and sealed with their blood, will be universally accepted, and the cause which they professed will be gloriously triumphant. “The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”§ This is the blessed MILLENNIUM—the thousand years which form the period of the Redeemer’s peaceful reign on earth—the era of the church’s brightest splendour and greatest spiritual prosperity. To this all preceding dispensations look forward as the time of “the restitution of all things”—in which promise and prediction find their full accomplishment, and the prayers and expectations of saints who have laboured and suffered throughout preceding ages meet their amplest fulfilment.

Connected with the church’s millennial glory, and as forming an eminent part of it, will be the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, to an extent and frequency hitherto unknown, and with blessings accompanying the administration, above all that were previously enjoyed. All the promised privileges that

* Zech. xiv. 9; Isa. xl. v. † Isa. ii. 2. ‡ Rev. xx. 4. § Dan. vii. 27.

constitute the millennial state, equally with the bright predictions of the Word, warrant this expectation.

i. The millennium will be the era of the *abundant outpouring of the Spirit*. Compared with this, all previous effusions of the Spirit were but partial and transient. This will be powerful and universal, and the effects will be most salutary and abiding. The Spirit will be poured upon us from on high—and “the wilderness will become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be counted for a forest.” “The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.”* The Spirit will be plentifully poured out, as water on the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. Then shall “they spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses.”† “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.”‡ This general and powerful effusion of the Spirit will impel great multitudes to observe the Supper with desire of heart, and will confer all needed qualifications for its right observance. The graces of the Spirit, quickening, reviving, sanctifying, and comforting, will be largely communicated, and excited into lively exercise. The “Spirit and Breath shall awake and come from the four winds”—and as they sweep over the valley of vision, “the dry bones” shall revive and stand up, “an exceeding great army.”§ The north and south gales of the Spirit blow upon the garden, and the spices flow out, as the preparation for and prelude of the Beloved coming to gather and eat His pleasant fruits.|| As at the day of Pentecost, animated by the plentiful effusion of the Spirit, the disciples and multitudes of converts “continued in fellowship,” and in the frequent “breaking of bread and in prayers,” so, in the last greatest and most powerful outpouring of the Spirit, Christians will not only delight in the feast of the Saviour’s love, but, as they observe it, the Spirit will efficaciously do His covenanted work in and towards them. He will glorify Christ, and will take the things that are His, and clearly show them. He will come as the Promised Comforter, to “teach them all things, and to bring all things to their remembrance, whatso-

* Isa. xxxii. 15, 17.

† Isa. xliv. 3, 4.

‡ Joel ii. 28.

§ Ezek. xxxvii, 9, 10.

|| Song iv. 16

ever Jesus had spoken unto them," and be to them the seal and earnest of their heavenly inheritance. The sacrament of the Supper, thus partaken of, with the Spirit copiously descending from on high, will be joyful and exhilarating—a royal "feast of fat things, full of marrow," and "of wines on the lees well-refined." To an extent and degree above all that the church has hitherto experienced, the rich and manifold graces of the Spirit are conferred upon the citizens of Zion:—they are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

2. In the *universal establishment of the kingdom of Christ* at the millennium, those who come to the communion feast realize great and excellent benefits. He is lifted up, and displayed in His glory, and they are attracted to Him, as the moral magnet of their souls. The daughters of Zion go forth to behold Him, and they see Him "with the crown wherewith His mother crowned Him, in the day of His espousals, in the day of the gladness of His heart."* Enemies and all disturbing elements are brought down; and none are found to hurt or destroy in the mountain of the Lord. With the word of the King there is power. The "shout of a King is heard in the midst of them." Graciously present in the assemblies of His saints, He does royal acts, in bestowing pardon and acceptance—in hearing and answering prayer—and conferring, with princely munificence, the gifts of His purchase—the blessings of His kingdom. When the King sits at His table, His saints, associated with Him in princely favour and dignity, emit the fragrance of holy graces. They appear as a royal priesthood—a holy nation—a peculiar people—appointed to show forth "the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light." In the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom, and by His presence with the church in her sacred ordinances, will be fully realized by His people the assurances of His love. "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." "And the Prince in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth shall go forth."†

3. Large numbers of converts in all lands will join in the celebration of the Supper, and will delight in its frequent ob-

* Song iii. 11.

Luke xxii. 29, 30; Ezek. xlvi. 10.

servance. The “fulness of the Gentiles shall come in,” and “all Israel shall be saved” (Acts xi. 25, 26). The middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile shall be removed, and both shall become one in Christ. After the predestined destruction of Antichrist shall have taken place, numbers of Jews, converted to the faith of the gospel, shall become instruments for the conversion of Gentile idolaters in many lands. “It shall come to pass that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them to the nations . . . to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.”* The *escaped of Israel*, in spreading the gospel, shall declare among the Gentiles the glory of God’s grace in the plan of human redemption—in His providential dealings with the Jewish people—and as displayed in holy ordinances; and this shall be blessed for the spiritual illumination and conversion of multitudes. “Ten men out of all nations, shall take hold of the skirt of one that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”† Thus great numbers of converts shall be gathered. “They shall bring all your brethren”—proselytes owned and embraced as brethren—“for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations . . . to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel unto the Lord.”‡ They willingly offer themselves as dedicated ones. Those who were the instruments of conversion present them as spoils which they have taken for Christ—as trophies of His love, devoted to His service and honour. They are brought “in a clean vessel;” as being themselves holy, and presented through pure ordinances. The “offering up of the Gentiles is thus acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”§ A people made willing in the day of power appear in “the beauties of holiness,” from the womb of the morning with the dew of their youth.|| From proselytes from the Gentiles, numbers will be taken to be heralds of salvation and missionaries of the cross. “I will take of them for priests and Levites.”¶ Thus all that render sacramental feasts to God’s people desirable will, at the millennial era, be abundantly enjoyed. Holy efforts for promoting the Redeemer’s glory will

* Isa. lxvi. 18, 19. † Zech. viii. 23. ‡ Isa. lxvi. 20. § Rom. xv. 16.

|| Ps. cx. 3. ¶ Hab. ii. 14; Heb. viii. 11.

be crowned with success ; spiritual dedication will distinguish worshippers of every class ; the joyful communion of saints will be experienced to an extent hitherto unknown in the church and the world. Our elder sister—the Jewish people—long cast out and forsaken, will be gathered again, and sit down with the Gentiles called, at the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Spiritual knowledge will be then greatly increased. “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” “They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord : for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them.”* “Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.”†

The frequent observance of sealing ordinances will eminently characterize the last bright period of the gospel dispensation. This might be inferred from the grace and power of the King and Head of the church, bringing His people to appointed places of fellowship and blessing; and from the plentiful and powerful operations of the Spirit, disposing them to put honour upon Christ, the Beloved of their souls, and to go with fervent desire of heart to scenes where they may enjoy intercourse with Him. It is, moreover, explicitly announced in prophecy, as distinctive of the church’s millennial glory—“And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.”‡ When the church is universally extended, and all believers meet by faith in Christ their temple, there is no mention made of particular *places of meeting*, but the *times* are notified, to indicate that frequently, at stated seasons, the people of God shall engage in the exercises of social worship. “New moons and Sabbaths” are specified, because, while the yearly festivals were celebrated at Jerusalem, these were observed in the synagogues throughout all parts of the land of Israel. They are thus adapted to the sacred feasts of the New Economy. When the Lord’s day is observed weekly, and the Lord’s Supper is dispensed, as in primitive times, weekly or monthly, then this bright prediction is fulfilled. Saints come up to worship in the Divine pre-

* Jer. xxxi. 34.

† Isa. xxx. 26.

‡ Isa. lxvi. 23.

sence—to attest their profession of truth—and as the expectants of blessings from the throne. By frequently assembling at communion feasts in the period of the church's millennial glory, the children of God display a holy profession and character, and have their holiness in its power and attractive beauty increased. "This is the law of the house: upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house."* The visible impress of holiness, in consecration to God, and purity of life, shall be upon their persons, and domestic and social employments, as well as on all their religious services. "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah, shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts."† The church will thus appear beautiful from situation, and become "the joy of the whole earth." "Out of Zion—the perfection of beauty, God will shine." The gracious manifested presence of the Redeemer, universally realized in her ordinances, will constitute the pre-eminent glory and blessing of the latter day. "The name of the city from that day shall be *Jehovah Shannah*, the Lord is there."‡

THE LORD'S SUPPER AS OBSERVED AT CHRIST'S SECOND COMING.

Above even the blessings enjoyed in holy ordinances during the millennium are those of which the saints become partakers at the glorious appearance of Christ when He shall come for judgment, at the close of the dispensation. The ordinance of the Supper was instituted to continue to the end of the world, and in it His death was to be shown forth till He would come again. Through the universal diffusion of the gospel, and the establishment of the church in all parts of the earth, in the period immediately preceding the general resurrection and the last judgment, the sacrament of the Supper will be celebrated much more widely and with greater frequency than at any former period of the church's history. While scoffers in the last days say—"Where is the promise of His coming?" and

* Ezek. xlili. 12.

† Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

Ezek. xlvi. 35.

enemies enlarged for a little season when the glory of the millennium has become obscured or under a partial eclipse, the faithful hold fast their integrity, and wait for the promised return of the Lord from the wedding. Suddenly, in a manner unexpectedly, He whom His people seek will come to His temple—even the Messenger of the covenant in whom they delight. “To them that look for Him, will He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” As the assemblies of saints are gathered together at the sacramental table, or as they rise up at the close of the feast—what they desired and expected becomes in a moment an object of bright vision and of realized enjoyment. The Lord is revealed in His glory from heaven. He comes as a triumphant conqueror, and His feet stand in the latter day upon the earth. As Zion’s King, He comes, no longer as a sin-bearer—in apparent weakness and His visage marred—“unto salvation,” but “the second time, without sin,” to complete in the fullest sense, the salvation of all the redeemed, and to receive the whole church to Himself spotless and glorious as a bride prepared for her husband. How blessed will be the privilege of partaking in the sacramental feast when He comes in the full visible display of His glory! Those who enjoy it will realize what entered into the hopes and expectations of the saints in all past ages, since the Saviour’s ascension to heaven—the chief part of eternal felicity begun. Should we not ardently love the Redeemer’s glorious appearance? As we look for and hasten to the coming of the day of the Lord, we should anticipate the joy of the final meeting and glory—“Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the God; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”*

* Isa. xxv. 9.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE END OF SACRAMENTS IN GLORY.

THE sacraments cease, when the Mediatorial scheme has reached its high purposes, and when the events of time shall give place to the glorious reign of eternity. The Redeemer having put down all opposing power and authority, will deliver up the kingdom to the Father—the Head of the Covenant economy, that “God may be All in all.” The number of the elect is then filled up. All their enemies are subdued; and their sanctification is completed. He presents them to Himself—“a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” In the heavenly state, to which the church triumphant is brought, the means of grace and of fellowship with God and the saints, which are necessary here, cease, as being no longer required; but the great ends of the seals of the covenant are perfectly attained. All that the Scriptures declare of the chief elements of the heavenly felicity attest this, and thus set forth the value of those preparatory ordinances. The church purified from corruption—triumphant over enemies—and arrayed in the beauty of holiness, appears in perfect order and resplendent glory. She is “the holy Jerusalem, descending from heaven from God”—“having the glory of God; and her light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” The ways of entrance are manifold, as the redeemed are gathered from all lands. The “street” of the city—its enlarged fellowship, most valuable and glorious, is as “pure gold, as it were transparent glass.” “And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple of it.”* The means of grace have ceased, when the end of grace has come. Unlike the ancient Jerusalem, where there was but one house erected for divine worship, to which the tribes of God went up, heaven is all temple, reared in honour of God’s name, where worship of the purest, loftiest kind ascends continually from every part of it. Ordinances, the most distinctive and valued

* Rev. xxi. 10, 21, 22.

give place to the God of ordinances. Intervening media, are superseded by uninterrupted and immediate communion with God and the Lamb. *Here*, saints dwelling in the flesh had to do with both worlds ; and ordinances were appointed, that, in waiting on them, they might for the time come out and be separate. After observing them, they had to go down to the earth, to take part in its concerns, and to the conflict with afflictions and temptations. In *heaven*, there is no such distinction. The redeemed never go down again from the mount, where they are gathered with the Lamb and His company. Their worship is a perpetual Sabbath—a high continued sacramental feast, where at the King's table, which shall never be drawn, they sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of the Father. The exalted ends of the sacramental Supper fully realized in heaven are such as these,—

i. Christ is *seen in the brightness of His glory*, and His saints made *perfect, are admitted to the nearest and most exalted fellowship with Him.*

The chief, earnest desire which believers cherished, in going to the feast of communion on earth, will be in heaven abundantly gratified. His servants shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads.* No longer do they behold only his “back parts,” but “His face” shall be seen, and that not through a glass darkly, but in clear, full manifestation. There shall be “no night there”—to interrupt the vision—and there is needed no imperfect medium of word or ordinances, such as faith requires here, to realize and enjoy it. “They need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light.”† Saints will behold with the bodily eye the glorified humanity of the Saviour—the Man, their Elder Brother, who bled and died for them ; and with faith, in its highest exercise, they shall see the fulness of the Godhead bodily dwelling in Him, while His mediatorial glory shall shine forth, in softened and attractive splendour. The vision will be immediate—all satisfying and transforming. “We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”‡ While the view of the Redeemer’s glory is a principal end of partaking of the sacramental feast on earth, it is but imperfectly attained by the saints while here ; and even when, at times enjoyed, it is liable to be beclouded and evanescent. Not until the eternal daybreak comes, and all mountains of

* Revelation xxii. 4, 5.

† 1 John iii. 2.

‡ Psalm xvii. 15.

separation are removed, and the shadows and darkness have for ever fled away, does the Beloved come and appear in His unveiled glory. They are blessed—while conversant with ordinances on earth, “who have not seen and yet have believed;” but full and perfect blessedness is reserved for that condition of the redeemed in glory, when, in the Redeemer’s immediate presence, they shall “see His face in righteousness,” and shall be for ever “satisfied with His likeness.”* A chief design of the Lord’s Supper is to advance the people of God to this state of bliss, and to prepare them for its full enjoyment; in their final admission to heaven, they will realize it, far beyond their loftiest conceptions, and fondest anticipations.

2. *Communion with glorified saints and holy angels* will be largely enjoyed. In the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, we are called to fellowship in the gospel with saints on earth and in heaven. When we approach to Mount Zion, we come to an “innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”† The redeemed from among men, and elect angels are gathered into one family in heaven and earth, which is named after Christ—its redeeming Head and Lord, and their compassionate Elder Brother. Partaking of the feast prepared in wisdom’s house, we enjoy the benefits of endeared fellowship with all who belong to the same mystical body, and who are brought to share the same blessed provision. Being one in Christ, the living Head, we are members one of another. We unite in the same prayers and praises, and in other acts of joint worship. We willingly impart spiritual help to brethren in all duty, as we receive succour from them in work and trial. And we readily sympathize with them in evil things, being companions with them that are exposed to suffering and affliction. The highest state of this spiritual communion on earth is that in which saints realize fellowship with the Persons of the blessed Godhead, and become, in consequence, mutual partakers of the benefits of redemption. Communion with saints and holy angels, however excellent, is imperfectly known and enjoyed by the church on earth. The faith and love that must be exercised are at times weak; believers are but imperfectly sanctified while on earth. They are often separated by distance, and alienated from one another, by differences of view, mistaken judgments, and cold-

* Ps. xvii. 15.

† Heb. xii. 23.

‡ Eph. iii. 15.

ness of affections. In heaven, nothing that divides brethren in Christ, or separates the saints from each other, exists any more. Made perfect in holiness, and gathered into the many-mansioned house of the Father—with the glory of the Lamb in noon-tide splendour shed upon them, their blessedness is enhanced, by being shared in company with all the saints brought home to heaven; and the enraptured praises of millions of ransomed ones, attest that their communion is perfect, and will be unbroken for ever. The redeemed sing in heaven, in the immediate presence of the Lamb, with sweetest melody, the “New Song”—and holy angels join them in all its principal notes, save that, not having sinned, they cannot say, “Thou hast redeemed us by thy blood.”* Glorified saints become like the angels; and those bright spirits who on earth saw in the church “the manifold wisdom of God,” and desired to look into the things of Christ and salvation, behold, with wrapt wonder, the glorious scheme in its completion. Thus, perpetually, in the service of the Upper Sanctuary, the loftiest, most blessed fellowship of holy intelligences will be known and enjoyed, constituting a main part of their eternal felicity.

3. The wondrous *scheme of the Covenant of redemption, and the mysteries of Providence* will be fully manifested.

The Lord’s Supper has been exhibited as a sacrament and seal of the Covenant of Grace. It presents symbolically the rich provision of the sovereign grace of God for the salvation of sinners. The material elements are designed to make a visible display of this provision—the bread to symbolize the spiritual food of the soul—the wine to set forth the blood by which the covenant is ratified, and its great blessings are conferred upon the heirs of salvation. In the ordinance, believers are owned as standing in a new covenant relation to God, and are bid welcome to all the blessed provision of the covenant. “God is not ashamed to be called their God,” and to acknowledge them as His people. They take hold of His covenant—as they come clothed with the wedding garment of the Mediator’s righteousness. They embrace its promises, dedicate themselves to the Lord, and rely on the grace of the covenant for all strength and acceptance in duty and trial. The privileges and blessings enjoyed in the ordinance were secured to the Redeemer by covenant-stipulation, as the reward of His Surety obedience, to be imparted to all that

* Revelation v. 9-11.

were given Him to be redeemed from among men. As they come to the sacrament, “the secret of the Lord is with them, and He shows them His covenant.” * Taking hold of the covenant, they are made joyful in the house of prayer.† They “incline their ear and come” to the Lord of the ordinance; they “hearken and their souls live,” and there is made with them an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David.‡ In heaven, the glorious scheme of the covenant is fully unfolded; and its manifold blessings are inherited for ever. As the earthly Canaan was guaranteed in covenant for a possession to Israel, so heaven in all its glory and blessedness is “the inheritance in light of saints” who were given to Christ before the foundation of the world. The throne on which the Lamb sits is encircled with “a rainbow in sight like an emerald”—the significant emblem this that all divine dispensations towards the redeemed are in covenant wisdom and love. Then the promises “exceeding great and precious,” which are the declarations of the divine purposes, are fully accomplished in the bestowment of countless and richest blessings. The “manifold wisdom of God” in the whole contrivance and scheme of mercy, is displayed “to the principalities and powers” in the heavenly places—to excite the wonder and stimulate the loud praises of the saints for ever.§

The covenant-stipulation embraced the whole arrangements of providence, pertaining to the kingdom of Christ on earth—the life and condition of saints in this world—their work and trials—the changes through which they pass—the means of grace given them—the relations in which they are brought to others—their spiritual calling, and allotted service in the church—and the time and circumstances of their death. All this is fully disclosed when they are brought home to glory. Clouds and darkness, that appeared at times to surround the throne, are for ever dispelled. The seven-sealed Book in the hand of the Lamb, is fully opened. In the visions of glory, what the saints before saw darkly is now beheld in noon-tide radiance. All things with which they were formerly conversant—whether prosperous or adverse, are seen to have been constantly working together for good. The divine thoughts towards the saints were ever “of good and not of evil, to give an expected end.” The roll of the covenant—the Lamb’s book of life, when completely opened, will disclose the names

* Psalm xxv. 14.

† Isaiah lvi. 6, 7.

‡ Isaiah lv. 3.

§ Eph. iii. 10.

of all the redeemed, recorded in “the writing of the house of Israel”—and every event that befel them in providence, contributing to the fulfilment of the covenant-purpose toward them of rich mercy and love. In the contrivance and execution of the amazing scheme of providence and redemption, God in covenant is seen to be “wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.” The happiness of the redeemed is greatly augmented, by being enjoyed as the reward promised to the Redeemer in covenant, and flowing to them, in virtue of federal arrangement, as the fruit of His Surety obedience. He “shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.”* “Happy is the people that is in such a case ; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.”†

Finally, in allusion to the rich spiritual blessings enjoyed in the Lord’s Supper, the heavenly state of the *saints is represented under a variety of bright and significant figures.* It is the “*Marriage Supper* of the Lamb, for which the Bride is made ready. They are unspeakably blessed who are called to it. With gladness and rejoicing, the “King’s daughter” and her fellow-virgins are brought unto the King in robes of purity and beauty. They come into the palace of the King, there to abide for ever. It is a *Feast*, at which the ransomed from earth sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, to enjoy the loftiest and most endearing communion. They *sit with Christ Himself* in His Father’s house, at His table, which shall never be drawn—and they share a communion which shall never be interrupted or come to an end. They “drink new wine” with Him, in partaking with Him of “fulness of joy and rivers of pleasure” at God’s right hand for evermore. No longer under tutelage and training, they are heirs—not in reversion, but in full and conscious enjoyment—of the promise—of salvation—of heaven. They are “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ”—dwelling with Him in light full of glory—filled unto all His fulness, sharing all His blessedness, and made holy as He is holy. This glory and blessedness of the saints—the end of all ordinances—will vastly surpass our highest conceptions while here, and be joy-inspiring, soul-satisfying and increasing throughout eternity.

* Isa. liii. 10, 11.

† Ps. cxliv. 9.

Our highest attainment in the richest communion feasts on earth was to have the seal of the heavenly inheritance, and the earnest of its assured possession. How immeasurably transcending this in glory and bliss will be the full and everlasting fruition of God Himself and all that blessedness, which His saints—loved from eternity, and redeemed by the blood of His Son—are capable of enjoying, and which it is befitting Him to confer ! “God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city.”

The last words of many of the martyrs of the covenant as they trod the scaffold, and sealed their noble testimony with their blood, gave full expression to their sense of the greatness of heavenly bliss, above the highest privileges of endeared fellowship with saints, and of communion seasons on earth. Among the youthful *Renwick's* last utterances in his dying testimony are these words—“Farewell, sweet Societies, desirable General Meetings, and Communion Sabbaths. Farewell, night wanderings in cold and weariness for Christ. Farewell, sweet Bible and preaching of the gospel. Farewell, sun, moon, and stars, and all sublunary things. Farewell, conflicts with a body of sin and death. Welcome, scaffold for precious Christ ; welcome, heavenly Jerusalem ; welcome, innumerable company of angels ; welcome, General Assembly and Church of the First Born ; welcome, crown of glory, white robes, and song of Moses and the Lamb ; and, above all, Welcome, O Thou blessed Trinity and One God. O, Eternal One ! I commit my soul into Thy Eternal Rest.”

CHAPTER IX.

TIMES OF ADMINISTERING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE inquiry how frequently the sacrament of the Supper should be administered is one of much interest and of great practical importance. Considering the observance of this ordinance to be one of the most distinguishing Christian privileges—one that leads believers to the nearest communion with the Redeemer and fellow-saints, and that eminently contributes to spiritual edification and comfort, it might seem as if access to it would be greatly desired by the friends of Christ, and that the practice of frequent communion would be common. Instead of this, there are few ordinances, respecting which a greater diversity in attendance prevails among professing Christians than this. In some religious communities, the sacrament of the Supper is celebrated only once a year; in others twice. Others observe it quarterly, omitting various preparatory services. A few attend upon the ordinance monthly, while a small number of churches, in different countries, observe a weekly communion every Lord's day. The less frequent observance of this sacred feast has been pleaded for, on the ground that there is no express Scripture injunction in opposition to it, and because it is alleged that the rich effusion of the Spirit, and the sufferings of the primitive church demanded an observance which is not required of us in the present times; and again, that a too frequent attendance upon this sacrament would render it too common, and thus lessen due solemnity and reverence, and so injure religion. To us there appears strong presumptive evidence that the Divine Author of this institution did not design to leave the time of observing the sacred feast undetermined; or to make it optional with his professed followers how frequently or how seldom they would manifest a public respect to His dying command. In the case of other institutions, such as the day of holy rest, and the preaching of the Word, stated times and frequency are indispensably required in order to reach the great ends of these ordinances. If the Lord's Supper was appointed as the grand means of commemorating the atoning death of Christ, and of showing it forth to the

world till His second coming, surely this implies that these great ends will be best attained by Christians often gathering together to keep the feast, instead of attending to it only occasionally, or at long intervals. A cursory view of the note of time in the original institution, and of the practice of the Christian church in ancient and modern times, and of the sentiments of distinguished servants of Christ—reformers and theologians—will show that we have the strongest ground to plead that attendance upon the Lord's Supper should be fixed and frequent.

The expression “*as often as*,” or “*as oft*”—twice repeated in the words of institution, it may be admitted, does not declare precisely the times of observance; but it does undeniably point in the direction of a known frequent observance, rather than authorize a latitudinarian discretion in persons to fix the time at their own pleasure. The original words ὅσάκος εὖ—“as many times soever”—imply that the Supper is an ordinance *often* to be partaken of. Most naturally, they seem to refer to some well-known and acknowledged rule of frequency—whether of weekly communion on the Lord's day, or of stated meetings for this special purpose. We have already shown that the administration of the Supper in the apostolic church was by regularly-appointed ministers in connexion with the preaching of the Word, and in the stated public worship on the first day of the week. Christians came together to hear the word of the gospel, and “for the breaking of bread.” There is every reason to conclude that, for a length of time, after the plentiful effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost, the practice prevailed throughout the primitive churches of celebrating the Sacrament of the Supper weekly—while, in some instances, it may have taken place even more frequently, on the occasion of the visits of apostles or eminent teachers, or in peculiar emergencies. The practice of the churches in Jerusalem—in Corinth and at Troas, as recorded in the inspired history, clearly establishes this; and the testimony of early Christian fathers, and of other distinguished writers of antiquity, is uniform and explicit, that the weekly communion was the universal practice of the primitive churches till towards the close of the fourth century, when the tide of error and corruption began to flow strongly throughout the church.

That the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was observed weekly in the assemblies met for worship in the earliest times

of Christianity, is attested by many ancient writers, among whom are Pliny, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Cyprian,* Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. These, with greater or less particularity, state that when Christians met together on the first day of the week, to preach and hear the word, and for public prayers and praise, their general, uninterrupted custom was to observe the memorial of Christ's death by the breaking of bread.

The practice of the principal reformed churches was in favour of the frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper, and the testimony of the chief reformers is very explicit on this subject. Thus *Calvin*, on his coming to Geneva, laboured to establish the observance of the communion *monthly*, and if possible *weekly*. In his "*Institutes*," he says, "It was not therefore that it should be received once a year, and that superficially for manner's sake, as now commonly the custom is—but that it should be in often use to all Christians, that, with often remembrance, they should repeat the passion of Christ; by which remembrance, they might sustain and strengthen their faith, and exhort themselves to sing, confession of praise to God, and to publish His goodness. Finally, by which they might nourish mutual charity, and testify it among themselves, whereof they saw the knot in the unity of the body of Christ." "For as often as we communicate of the sign of the body of the Lord, we do, as by a token given and received, interchangeably bind ourselves one to another unto all duties of love, that none of us do any thing whereby he may offend his brothers, nor omit any thing whereby he may help him, when need requireth and ability alloweth." † Again, after showing how the practice of infrequent communion had been introduced, and had spread in the church, Calvin says—"Truly this custom which commandeth to communicate

* Cyprian de Oratione Dominica, Opera, p. 421, speaks of the daily celebration of the Eucharist.

† Calvin laboured at Geneva to have established the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper. For a time he seems to have prevailed so far as to have the communion observed among the people about once in the month; but when resistance by the Libertines against the endeavours of the reformer and his colleagues became more marked, and various troubles broke out, the rule was adopted to sanction, by public authority, the observance of the sacrament of the supper four times in the year. Calvin mentions, however, that he took care to have it entered on the record, that this was "an evil custom," that posterity might, with the greater liberty and ease correct it.

yearly only, is a most certain invention of the devil, by whose ministry soever it was brought in By this it is come to pass, that almost all men when they have once communicated, as though they had sufficiently discharged themselves for all the rest of the year, sleep soundly on both oars. It ought to have been far otherwise done. Every week at least, the Lord's table should be set before the assembly of Christians ; the promises should be declared, which might bind us spiritually at it ; none should indeed be compelled of necessity, but all should be exhorted and pricked forward, the sluggishness also of the slothful should be rebuked. All should by heaps, as hungry men, come together to such dainties. Not without rightful cause therefore at the beginning, I complained that by the craft of the devil, this custom was thrust in, which when it appointeth one certain day of the year, maketh men slothful for all the rest of the year.”*

The Lutheran Churches, from the earliest period, sought to observe the communion every Lord's day, and on the different holidays throughout the year—a practice which, in several countries on the continent of Europe, they still observe. *Cranmer*, and others of the first English reformers, were in favour of the weekly communion ; and in the early regulations of the English Protestant church, provision is made for the celebration of the Lord's Supper thus in all the Cathedral churches. In the period of the first reformation in Scotland, the method of frequent communion was proposed and settled in the *order and policy of the church*. There is reason to think that John Knox, from his intimate connexion with the Swiss reformers, and especially from his intercourse with Calvin at Geneva, held the same views concerning the times of observing the sacramental supper. But to avoid the superstitious observance of holidays, it was settled in the First Book of Discipline (c. xi. § 5), that “the administration of the Lord's table four times in the year be deemed sufficient.” It is added, in addressing the Great Council of Scotland—“Your Honours are not ignorant how superstitiously the people were to that action at Pascha (Easter), even as if the time gave virtue to the sacrament, and how the rest of the whole year, they are careless and negligent, as if it appertained not unto them, but at that time only.”

The Nonconformist Churches, and leading Puritan divines,

* Calvin—Institutes B. iv. c. 17.

were generally in favour of the frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper. The writings of Owen, T. Goodwin, Baxter, Charnock, and others, bear full and clear testimony on this subject, as do also those of eminent modern divines, such as Drs Doddridge, Watts, President Edwards, Mason, Erskine, etc. And distinguished ecclesiastical historians, critics, and theologians all concur in the sentiment that frequent communion was the universal practice of antiquity, and that it should still be the established order of the church. Of historians may be mentioned Mosheim, Neander, Bingham; and of critics and theologians, Beza, Witsius, Hammond, Whitby, Waterland, Maclean, Haldane, etc. We have thus a testimony, full and unbroken — continued from the earliest times of Christianity, and given by communities and individuals in different countries and circumstances,—showing most clearly that the frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper is to be regarded as accordant with the design of the Head of the church—that it has been attended to in the purest and best times of the church, and that its observance is calculated to subserve the most beneficial purposes for the unity, purity and prosperity of the church.

From these views of the sacred writers, and the concurrent testimonies of the evangelical churches, and of eminent servants of God in different periods, we cannot hesitate to declare that a more frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper than what is now practised deserves to be adopted throughout the churches. Even should we admit that the Scripture expression, "as often as," which occurs in the record of the first institution, does not point to a fixed and definite time of celebration, it certainly cannot be properly understood as meaning otherwise than that the ordinance should be attended to at brief intervals.

The objection commonly presented that the weekly or monthly observance of the ordinance would tend to diminish a sense of its solemnity, and to encourage an irreverent approach to the holy table, and would be incompatible with due preparation for communicating, is, when duly considered, seen to be destitute of substantial weight. On the same ground that it is advanced, frequent attendance upon other divine institutions, such as prayer—the Sabbath—the hearing of the Word, would interfere with their solemnity, and cause them to be regarded with irreverence. But the observed facts are altogether the reverse of this. Those who have prayer as their element, and who

have learned to pray without ceasing, experience how solemn and "good it is to draw near to God"—and they know that "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of His saints," and to be "had in reverence of all them that are about Him." On the other hand, those who seldom pray, or who have no stated seasons of prayer, offer but a mere "bodily service"—honour God with their lips while their hearts are far from Him, and are in danger of sinning presumptuously. They who "call the Sabbath a delight"—"the holy of the Lord honourable," rejoice in its weekly return, and hail it as "the pearl of days"—the "best of all the seven." And it is ever found that such as attend most frequently upon the word preached, and upon public ordinances, are, compared with others in the visible church, the most devout and reverential in their spirit and conduct, as they manifest more abundant spiritual fruit, "in all holy conversation and godliness." The objection to which we advert is suitably answered in the nervous and expressive language of the late Dr Mason of New York—"Is it countenanced by the word of God, by the nature of the exercise, or by the experience of believers? Did Jesus, when He said—*This do in remembrance of Me*, caution us not to do it too frequently, lest we should lose our veneration? Did He bid us show our reverence to His institution, by trampling on His command? or, our gratitude for His love, by slighting His memorial? The same objection was made by some at the Reformation, and was treated with the utmost indignation! "A wonderful reverence, truly, for the sacrament," cries *Bucer*, "by which it is contemned, and the saving communion therein offered with the Son of God rejected!" But let us appeal to fact. Do other duties grow contemptible by their frequency? Is the Sabbath vile, because of its weekly return? Are the divine Scriptures; is family worship; is secret and ejaculatory prayer insipid to those who are most conversant with them? "*Pray without ceasing;*" saith the Holy Ghost. "*Pray but seldom,*" replies the objection we are combating. You will be too bold and familiar with holy things, if you meddle with them. Frequent prayer will end in profaning the presence of God, because it will diminish your sense of His majesty! How does this language sound in pious ears? The heart of a believer revolts; his blood runs cold; the testimony in his own breast refutes, as he goes along, these impious suggestions. And can any man conceive why frequent prayer, meditation, etc.,

should promote the spiritual life, and quequent communion hinder it? Will increased faith produce unbelief? or, renewed love indifference? Will melting views of divine grace harden the heart? or, a commanding sense of the divine glory generate pride? Will fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ abate heavenly-mindedness? or, the sealing of the Spirit of promise carnal confidence? Oh! tell it not in Gath. Let not the rumour reach an uncircumcised ear,—that believers in Jesus who profess to love Him supremely: proclaim His excellence to others: and declare that the more they know and enjoy Him, the more they desire to know and enjoy; that even believers in Jesus, when invited to frequent an ordinance which He hath left as a seal of covenant mercies—a means of intercourse with Himself—a pledge of His eternal kingdom, should not only refuse but *justify* their refusal by pleading that it would diminish their reverence!"*

Taking into account the different states and circumstances of the congregations of the church in these countries, the Lord's Supper might be celebrated without difficulty or inconvenience, at least *once in the quarter*, and, with due consideration and earnest activity on the part of ministers, elders and people, even a *monthly communion* might be established. So frequent an observance, while approaching near to the primitive usage, would, we are fully persuaded, in no respect interfere with the solemnity of attendance at the sacramental table, or promote irreverence, or lead to unworthy partaking. It might, indeed, render it expedient or necessary to dispense with several of the week-day public services, that are now connected with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. But while it is not denied that these are valuable as tending to withdraw the minds of communicants from worldly things, and as affording leisure from engrossing earthly concerns, for engaging in acts of special preparation, and presenting motives for their performance, they cannot be pleaded for as indispensably required for the observance of this sacred ordinance. In the early period of the Reformation in Scotland, the sacrament was celebrated without the accompaniment of public religious services on several week-days. These were afterwards introduced, at a time of religious awakening, which they were intended to sustain and help forward; and it was not proposed at first that

* Mason on Frequent Communion, p. 47-49.

they should be permanently resorted to when the occasion ceased. In the present state of society, and in the circumstances of many of the members of the church, who are engaged in public worldly business, or who have not full control over their time—being in the employment of others, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a number of days in the course of the year for religious services. But, inasmuch as it cannot be shown that these are absolutely necessary to the right observance of the sacrament of the Supper, they may to some extent be dispensed with, without danger of corrupting or degrading the ordinance, or of preventing its beneficial spiritual effects. If the alternative proposed were whether the Lord's Supper should be seldom dispensed, with the accompaniment of all the week-day services—or frequently, without them, in part or wholly, we would certainly have no hesitation in preferring the latter; and we have every confidence that the most experienced Christians, who value most highly its privileges, and who desire to promote its great ends for themselves and others, will concur in this opinion. The sacrament of Baptism is administered frequently, and that without the observance of days for preparation and thanksgiving; and yet, when it is properly dispensed and received, it is not regarded with want of reverence. Viewed in the light of Scripture, there does not appear any good reason why the one sacrament should be dispensed in a hasty manner, and the other with many supernumerary services—fasts, preparations, and thanksgivings. Both demand, on the part of those who come to these services thought, self-examination, earnest prayer, and the forsaking of sin; but such exercises may and will be essayed by the children of God, even when they may be pressed by worldly engagements, and have not due opportunity to separate themselves for special religious services. Were public religious exercises in connection with the Supper on week-days dispensed with, their place might be supplied in part by *fellowship meetings for united prayer*, at which the ministers and elders would be present, and by individuals and families setting apart times in private for appropriate religious exercises. By the outpouring of the Spirit in the way of gracious revival, which is promised as the great blessing of the last times, which we should ever earnestly seek, the church will obtain all needful preparation for the feast of holy communion, and will realize an abundant blessing

* Isa. lxv. 24.

in its frequent observance. "And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." "And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another saying, let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also, Yea, many people, and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.*

The following, which was omitted by an oversight in printing, should be inserted in the conclusion of chapter xiii., part i.—"The Perpetual Obligation of the Lord's Supper."

This ordinance is of the nature of a public monument erected, and public actions performed, to perpetuate the remembrance of the great facts of Christianity, and to confirm faith in its doctrines. To render this evidence full and unquestionable, the memorial dates from the time that the event occurred, and has been continued uninterruptedly through succeeding ages, till the present time. The *facts* of Christianity are inseparably connected with its *doctrines*, so that if the one is admitted, the other becomes worthy of all acceptation. The sacrament of the Supper, in the objects which it exhibits, and the ends for which it was instituted, symbolically, but most impressively, proclaims the truth of Christianity, and shows its transcendent excellency. As a scheme of mercy for an apostate and lost race, it originated in God's infinite love and sovereign grace. A Saviour is provided adequate to the undertaking—the Lord mighty and ready to save. He dies as a Substitute in the room of the guilty; and by His obedience unto death, obtains eternal redemption for them. On the ground of full satisfaction to divine justice by the death of the Surety, sinners are pardoned and received into God's favour. Loving fellowship is established between God and man; all things in heaven and earth are reconciled to God. Men of all kindreds, people, and tongues—united to Christ, their living Head—are gathered into one family in heaven and earth, which is named after Him, and becomes partakers of all its high and honourable privileges. These great things are held forth, in the Lord's

* Isa. lxv. 24; Zach. viii. 21, 22.

Supper, in a bright epitome—in impressive symbol and embodied action. The Saviour appears in the transcendent excellency of His love and condescension, and “His glory is great in the salvation, which He has wrought.” The tabernacle of God is with men on earth, and whilst He is their God, He owns them as His people.

The *power* and *glory* of our holy religion are not less seen than is its truth declared in the sacrament of the Supper. In the character and privileges of those who rightly observe it, there is manifested the power of Christian faith to transform and elevate the moral nature, and to raise men, sinful and degraded, to the enjoyment of the highest privileges. Christians assembled in holy fellowship are made to know the exceeding greatness of God’s power, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.* The word spoken is the rod of God’s strength sent out of Zion, endued with quickening, life-giving power; and a willing people, brought nigh, appear in the beauties of holiness. Christianity thus professed and exemplified becomes a mighty power for good—diffusing abroad the savour of Christ’s name, and bringing the nations into subjection to the Prince of the kings of the earth. Christians,—one in faith and united in love, reflect the glory of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. Others take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. And multitudes—beholding the beauty of the Lord, displayed in holy ordinances, and shining in the sacramental host, are constrained to say—“How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!” “There is none like the God of Jeshurun.” The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” “We will go with you, for we have heard God is with you.”* The devout observance of the Lord’s Supper declares, in the most impressive manner, the truth and excellency of Christianity, and presents to the world an exhibition of its power and glory, far brighter and more illustrious than any mere doctrinal profession, or than any gorgeous ritual. One believing communicant at the Lord’s table, commemorating the Saviour’s death, and dedicating himself anew to the Lord, is a living testimony the most

* Ephesians i. 19, 20.

† Numbers xxiv. 8; Deut. xxxiii. 29; Zechariah viii. 23.

powerful to the grace of the covenant; and a Christian society, assembled together in the solemn feast, making a united declaration of their dependence on Christ, love to fellow-saints, and joy in receiving the atonement, shows in most attractive lustre the beauty and excellence of true religion. How great is our obligation thus to witness for Christ and His cause! How sad the condition of such as, by neglecting this ordinance, show that they are unconcerned for the glory of the Redeemer's name!

A P P E N D I X.

Note, page 33.

THE PASSOVER.

IT is obvious, from the narrative of the Evangelists, that there was designed to be a close connexion between the ancient ordinance of the Passover, and the grand institution of the New Economy—the Lord's Supper. Not only did the one merge into the other, and was designed to supersede it, but there were also various parts of the observance of the sacred Supper which had a marked reference to the prescribed ritual of the Passover. The later usages of the Jews in the celebration of the Passover, whether in our Lord's days or subsequently, are deserving of an incidental notice. In the first instance, at the period of Israel's emancipation from Egypt, it was ordained that the Paschal victim should be slain at “the door of the tabernacle of the congregation;” and the law afterwards enjoined that the slaying should be done in “the place which the Lord should choose to put His name” (Deut. xvi. 2)—thus indicating that the tabernacle should be the centre of this service. After the settlement in the land of Promise, from the time of Solomon, this place was the court of the temple, where each party of worshippers who represented the company that was to participate with him, slew his respective victim, while the blood was exclusively received, and sprinkled by the priests. As this court could only accommodate a limited number at once, it is related by Jewish writers that the killing was appointed to be performed by three companies in succession—the doors to be shut so soon as the first company had filled it, and so again with the second and third. The slaying of the victims was accompanied with the blowing of trumpets, and singing the great Hallel hymn by the Levites.—that is Psalms cxiii. to cxviii. inclusive. In some place, at a convenient distance from the temple court, the flaying of the lambs,

and other subordinate preparations were performed, and then each party took his lamb to the house where the family group was gathered together that was to share in the feast.

In the original institution, it was expressly ordained that the people were to eat the Passover *standing*, with their shoes on their feet, and staves in their hands. This posture had, before our Lord's days, given place to one of leaning or dis-cumbency at table, which Jewish writers account for by alleging that "a man in every generation is bound to eat and drink in a posture of freedom, as if he himself had been delivered out of the bondage of Egypt."* This usage is evidently referred to incidentally in the narrative of the evangelists, where our Lord is said to have sat down, or put Himself in a recumbent posture with His disciples (Matt. xxvi. 20; Mark xiv. 18; John xiii. 23).

It is, moreover, noteworthy that in the original appointment of the Passover, the use of the cup at the feast is no part of the prescription. In the celebration in later times, this had become common, if not universal. In the last Passover of our Lord, it is distinctly mentioned by Luke (xxii. 17, 18), that He took the cup after he had sat down, and given thanks, and said—"Take this cup and divide it among yourselves." This giving thanks and distribution took place at the commencement of the feast, and was evidently a part of the Passover service. The cup afterwards mentioned was that of the Lord's Supper, and not properly of the ancient feast. Rabbinical writers lay much stress on the use of the cup at the Passover, affirming that even the poorest Israelite was bound to drink four cups of wine, mixed with water. While it may be that the use of the cup in the Passover—though not in the original institution, was sanctioned by inspired prophets, there is plainly much of tradition and legend in the accounts of Jewish writers on the subject. Neither in Josephus nor in the Gospels is there found any confirmation of their statements. In the narrative of Luke, there appears a probable allusion to the practice of thanksgiving, with which the feast commenced, followed by the drinking of the wine-cup. The last cup, which is said to have been drunk after the feast was concluded, and the table cleared of the dishes and fragments, was drunk with loud and lengthened expressions of gratitude and praise for all temporal and spiritual privileges of the favoured people. It

* Misnha and Mainonides—quoted in Lightfoot's Works, ix. p. 148.

is probably in allusion to such practices that the sacramental cup as taken by our Lord is termed “the cup of blessing,” and that it is recorded that He took it “after supper;” and hence too may have arisen the designation of the feast—the *Eucharist*, the Greek word signifying thanksgiving.

Note, p. 35.

THE ELEMENTS—BREAD AND WINE IN THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The question whether our Lord used *leavened* or *unleavened* bread at the institution of the Supper has, at different times, led to keen and protracted disputes in the church. The Greek Church holding that Christ ate the paschal lamb with His disciples on the day before the ordinary celebration by the Jews, when the days of unleavened bread had not commenced, maintain that it is most probable that He used leavened bread in the Supper. This opinion led to fierce disputes—the doctors of the Greeks opprobiously designated the Latins *Azymites*, from words that denote *without leaven*. The Latins maintaining that the Saviour observed the Passover at the accustomed time, held that *unleavened bread* was employed, because immediately after the paschal feast, He instituted the Supper, when the feast of unleavened bread had commenced. In so doing, He took the bread that was on the table, and by thanksgiving and prayer, set it apart for a sacred and sacramental purpose; and besides, it was strictly prohibited to have aught of leaven among the people. There would seem to be no doubt that this is the proper view of the subject, and that the bread which the Saviour divided was unleavened bread. The same topic became a matter of controversy in the early days of the Reformation on the Continent. Several of the Swiss Churches held different views in relation to it; and during Calvin's ministry at Geneva, there were perplexing agitations on this subject. The Reformer considering the question immaterial, in view of the other great matters connected with the sacrament of the Supper, permitted the continued use of unleavened bread in the church at Geneva. The use of unleavened bread in the Passover was commemorative of the Israelites leaving Egypt in haste, when they took with them dough for bread, before it was mixed with leaven—

but unleavened bread can have no such signification under the New Testament. Our Lord appropriated such bread as was at the time on the table; and if His example is, as it should be, of all force to us, we too should employ such bread as is commonly used for food and nourishment. Although we may lay little stress on the *distinctive properties* of the sacramental bread, it may deserve some consideration whether bread of the common loaf is not much more suitable to our Lord's example in the institution and observance of the Supper, than the prepared cakes, often made of ingredients which render them indigestible, that are employed at present in the sacramental feast in many Presbyterian congregations.

THE WINE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The question which has come of late to be keenly agitated in some quarters, whether our Lord, in instituting the sacrament of the Supper used *fermented* or *unfermented* wine, is not so easily determined on the one side or the other, as some would have us believe. There is at least, in our view, a strong presumption that the liquid employed was non-intoxicating, because it is termed by our Lord "*the fruit of the vine*," and because there was the most stringent command forbidding all leaven in the paschal feast; and this prohibition applied to leaven or ferment in the wine, equally as to leaven in the bread. But while holding this, we regard it as inexpedient and unprofitable to agitate in present circumstances, a subject which may mar fellowship in a holy ordinance, stumble the weak, and tend to present an obstacle to Christians obeying the Saviour's special dying command. The duty of the strong is to bear the infirmities of the weak—to do all for edification—and to wait for greater light, from a more careful exegesis of Scripture, and from the investigations of science in relation to the nature and effects of alcoholic liquor; and above all, to seek the abundant promised effusion of the Spirit, when "all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest," and when Christians shall in all things act in strict conformity to the rule of the Word.

There appears to be no doubt that it was the received custom of the Jews to mingle the wine of the Passover with water.* Yet *Witsius* says—"This was left to the discretion of the Jews, as a matter of indifference, on the very solemnity of the

* *Witsius* on the Covenants, B. iv. c. 17.

Passover.”* On this ground, and perhaps in reference to the fact that when our Lord’s side was pierced by the soldier’s spear, there flowed from it blood and water, the practice of mixing the sacramental wine with water largely prevailed in the Primitive church. It is now generally agreed by distinguished writers—Romanist as well as Protestant, that this practice is unnecessary. Still the diluting of the wine used in the sacrament in the early ages, and that in vinous countries where the liquor, even if fermented, was much less intoxicating than that which is used in our day, may serve to show that, in a sacred ordinance, all care should be taken to dis- countenance the use of drugged and alcoholic mixtures, and to employ the pure juice of the grape as most accordant with the original prescription, and with the spiritual signification of the element.

Note, p. 97.

THE LORD’S SUPPER CONSIDERED AS A SEAL OF THE COVENANT.

In a very full and exhaustive “*Treatise on the Covenant of Grace*,” by the late Dr John Colquhoun of Leith, the subject of the sacraments as seals of the covenant of grace, both under the legal and evangelical economy, is discussed at considerable length.

Speaking of the uses of seals or signets in general, he says—“ They served, among other purposes, to ratify a commission ; to denote consent or approbation ; and especially to confirm a contract, a bond or deed. According to this last use of a seal, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, under the New Testament seal, the eternal covenant to all who are within the bond of it ; that is to say, by the blessing of Christ, and the working of His Spirit ; they *confirm* the divine contract to them ; they serve to attest, to settle, to ratify, or by new evidence, to put it past doubt to them. They confirm to believers, the *condition* of it, namely, “ the righteousness of faith.” They likewise confirm to them the *promises*, and consequently

* The Jews called the wine even when mixed with water, “ the fruit of the vine,” having regard to the greater and better part of it. Quoting from the Babylonian Talmud, it is said—“ They pronounce not the blessing on the wine in which no water is mingled, saying, Blessed be He who created the fruit of the vine tree ; but blessed be He who created the fruit of the tree.”—*Witsius on the Covenants*, B. iv. ch. 17.

the blessings promised. By confirming both the conditions and the promises of the covenant, they ratify or confirm the *whole* of the covenant; and by confirming or making sure, or putting past doubt to them, the whole of the covenant, as an *object* of faith, those ordinances do, for that reason, confirm their *faith* in Him, who is ‘given for a covenant of the people.’ The more sure the object of their faith appears to be to believers, the *firmer* or stronger does their faith in that object become. They also confirm the *dedication* of believers as His people, to God in Christ, according to the covenant; and lastly, they confirm their personal *interest* in the covenant. Thus, they seal and confirm the covenant to all that are within it. Since in these ordinances, there are sensible signs, or such visible confirmations of the covenant, as strike the external senses, they are admirably adapted, in the hand of the Spirit of grace, to strengthen the faith, and thereby the other graces of believers. What we only hear, concerning an object at a distance, if the report appears well founded, we indeed believe; but of what we see, or handle or touch, we are still *more* assured.”

Treating especially of the Lord’s Supper, Dr C. regards it as a seal on God’s part—not only confirming to believers the covenant, and its blessed provision—but he likewise considers it as a seal and sign of their union and communion with Christ, and of their dedication to God, and their obligation to all holy obedience. Referring to the sacramental elements and actions, he speaks in the way of spiritual meditation and personal application, in a number of particulars.

The ordinance is to believers a sign and seal, i. of the *making* of the covenant, and of the wonderful *incarnation*, according to that covenant, of “the only begotten Son of the Father.” “The believing communicant may thus say within himself—“As certainly as I *see* the minister taking the bread—that sign of the body of Christ, so certain is it that the Father, in making the covenant with Him, *took* or admitted Him to be the Representative and Surety of all who should believe in Him; and that Christ Himself, in order to obey and suffer for them, *took* the human nature into personal union with the divine. And as certainly as I now behold the minister taking the cup of wine, so certain may I be, that the eternal Father *took* and held the righteousness of Jesus Christ as *fully sufficient* to merit for me all

the grace and glory bequeathed in His testament. By this means, these glorious doctrines are, in the view of faith, confirmed or put beyond doubt."

2. "The ordinance is to believers a seal of the *mediation* and *covenant-Headship* of the Lord Jesus. Thence may they take occasion to assure themselves, that the eternal Son of God was, in the covenant, set *apart* to the *offices* of a Mediator ; and that it is His office to bless them with every covenant-blessing, whether spiritual or temporal ; that whilst it is their duty to be free *receivers*, it is His office to be a gracious *Giver* of all the blessings of the covenant.

3. "It is a sign and seal of the *righteousness of faith*. The believing communicant may say, when he sees the bread broken, and the wine poured out—'As certainly as I now see the bread broken, and the wine poured out, the body of the Lord Jesus was broken, and His blood was shed for the remission of my sins. I may, from what I see, be fully assured that the Surety-righteousness of the Second Adam is completely fulfilled ; and that all the benefits of the New Covenant are thereby merited for me, and for many. I may henceforth be confident that by the shedding of His blood, His New Testament is ratified ; that all the legacies bequeathed in it are purchased ; and therefore they are sure—the sure mercies of David.'

4. "It is a sign and seal of the *promises* and of the *grace* of the covenant. The believing communicant may, within himself, reason thus—'As certainly as I now behold the wine in the cup, signifying the New Testament in the blood of Jesus Christ, so certain may I be of the precious promises, and of the inestimable blessings promised in the covenant. Now, in taking the sacramental cup, I may freely take the promises as my security for all the mercies of the covenant, and my faith in them may rise to full assurance. They are not only spoken, and written and sworn, and witnessed and ratified, but they are *sealed*, and that to me. Here, I have all the grace and glory which was purchased and promised by my incarnate Redeemer, *secured* to me under His own seal.'

5. "The Supper is likewise a sign and seal of Christ's *administration* of the covenant to sinners who believe. The giving of these sacred symbols to *each* of them in particular, accompanied with an invitation or command to *all* of them, to take and eat of the bread, and to drink of the cup represents

the offer and call of the gospel, directed to each of them, as his present and particular warrant, to trust in Christ, and in His righteousness, for all His fulness. It is a sensible sign that the person of Christ is given him to be trusted *in*, the righteousness of Christ to be trusted *on*, and the fulness and the benefits of Christ to be trusted *for*. Each believing communicant may warrantably say—‘As certainly as these outward signs are now given to me, the body and blood of my incarnate Redeemer, with all the benefits of redemption, are given me in offer, as a sinner in myself—and are given me in possession, as a believer in Him. The giving of the bread and wine, which are the consecrated signs of them to me, is the sure token that they are all exhibited, all offered to me; and that the authentic offer and call afford me a right to trust in the Lord Jesus for the possession of them all.’

6. “It is a sign and seal of their *union* and *communion* with Christ in grace and glory. The devout communicant in partaking of the sacramental elements may say in his heart—‘As certainly as the bread which I have eaten, and the wine which I have drunk are now mine in possession, the body and blood and benefits of Jesus Christ—now that my heart has trusted in Him, are in like manner mine. As sure as my dear Saviour hath now admitted me to eat of that broken bread, which is ‘the communion of His body,’ and to drink of that ‘cup of blessing, which is the communion of His blood, and hath enabled me, in some degree, to trust in Him, for all the blessings purchased by His precious blood, so certain may I be that He admits me, according to the covenant, to communion with Himself, in His person, righteousness and fulness. ‘Truly my fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.’ I shall say of Him—‘Surely, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.’ ‘My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.’

7. “It is also to believers a public testimony or token of their union and communion with *all the other members of Christ’s mystical body*. This is *confirmed* to them in the ordinance. Each of them may, in communicating, thus say of himself—‘As certainly as I, in faith, eat of the same sacramental bread, and drink of the same sacramental cup, I have, in union with Christ, my Covenant-Head, union with all the other members of His mystical body. And I have, in communion with Him in His body and blood, fellowship with them “who

are all partakers of that one bread," and that one cup which signify His body and blood, and the blessings thereby purchased. This, in the hand of the Spirit of truth, assures me that, whilst I am an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ, I am also a fellow-heir with saints, and of the same body. It confirms me in the faith that I share with them in all the merit of the blood of Jesus Christ, and in all the legacies of His testament, ratified by His death ; that I and they are one body, and have one Spirit, " Even as we are called in one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all."

8. Finally. "The ordinance of the Supper is to believers, a seal of their dedication of themselves to God, and of their obligation to obey, in faith and love, all the commandments of His law, in the hand of Christ, the great Mediator of the covenant. It confirms or strengthens their dedication of themselves to God in Christ as His covenant-people, and the high obligation which redeeming love especially has laid upon them, to love Christ and to keep His commandments. While, by receiving the holy sacrament of the Supper, they solemnly declare that they are infinitely obliged to their dear Redeemer for His unparalleled love, in " becoming obedient unto death " for them, this ordinance, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, serves to confirm the high obligation—that is to assure them of it, and to show them how firm it is. The love of Christ manifested in this ordinance, constrains them, not to live henceforth to themselves ; but unto Him who died for them and rose again. By their partaking of the sacramental bread *broken*, and of the sacramental wine *poured* out, they practically declare that they would deserve to have their own body broken in pieces, no less than that bread, and their own blood poured out, no less than that wine, if they should ever prove unfaithful to their solemn engagement, to serve their God and Redeemer." From this view of the Lord's Supper, as a seal of the covenant, the true Christian may learn for his comfort, that his interest in the eternal covenant, and his begun possession of Christ, are so confirmed, that he shall never fall out of the covenant." Hence too, we may see how inexcusable is the believer, if, instead of giving all diligence to attain the full assurance of faith and hope, he yields to distrust and despondency.*

* Colquhoun on the *Covenant of Grace*, pp. 507-577.

Note, p. 175.

BRIEF EXPOSITION OF TERMS OF COMMUNION.

The necessity of having explicit terms of communion, declarative of the church's profession, may be shown from various considerations. It is clearly warranted from the character and practice of the church, as exhibited in the New Testament. The church is represented as "the Pillar and the ground of truth." She stands forth before the world lying in darkness as a monumental column, having inscribed on it inspired truth, and bearing testimony to every article of divine revelation—her members receiving and professing the truth in love, and being examples in their hearts and lives of its subduing and transforming power. They are represented as "holding forth the word of life"—as "of one heart and mind striving together for the faith of the gospel"—"contending earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." They are required to be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment"—and in allusion to the natural body and its members, those who are in the fellowship of the church are represented as fitly joined together—"speaking the truth in love"—and "making increase to the edifying of itself in love."

The members of the Primitive Christian church, after the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, eminently manifested this oneness of faith and practice in connection with the observance of holy ordinances, and in domestic fellowship. (Acts ii. 42.) "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and of prayers." There seems to be direct reference to explicit terms of communion, as used in the apostolic church in the words of the New Testament. Paul exhorts Timothy as a pastor of the church, to "hold fast *the form of sound words*, which he had heard of him."* This most probably refers to a compendious summary of evangelical truth, which had been delivered to Timothy, by which he would be directed in the admission of persons to the fellowship of the church, or in excluding from it.

Scriptural terms of communion clearly understood and

* 2 Tim. i. 15.

embraced are essential to the *unity* and *purity* of the church. Without such terms, faithful discipline is impracticable; and no general and sustained efforts for diffusing the truth can be successfully made, without settled principles of union and fellowship, by which the profession of the church becomes *visible*. Associations among men cannot be formed and maintained without a definite basis of agreement and co-operation. Whether we compare the church with such associations, or consider her character and practice as exhibited in the revealed will of her glorious Founder, or have regard to her unity, purity, and future enlargement, there is indispensable need that the grounds of the fellowship existing among her members should be explicitly declared and well understood. This cannot be properly done without the use of definite published terms of ecclesiastical communion.

The long established practice of the *Reformed Presbyterian Church* in these countries, has been to propound its terms of communion upon certain solemn occasions, as upon the admission and recognition of entrants into her fellowship, by individual profession or baptism, and at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, when its ministers and members are about to hold Christian communion together. The value and importance of such a practice have been seen, in the unity of faith and practice, and the uniformity in observing ordinances of worship which characterize its members. It is ever required that those who walk together in a religious profession should be fully agreed, as well in the acknowledgment of the truth, as in heart and affection. It is especially befitting to have clearly stated and applied fundamental principles of a Christian profession, when ministers and people are called to pledge anew to Zion's King, vows of adherence to His cause, and for the propagation of precious truth.

The TERMS OF COMMUNION adopted by the church should be few, scriptural, comprehensive, and intelligible. They should embrace the whole revealed truth of God—all the duties of our holy religion—the attainments of the witnesses of the Lamb at different times—and the prominent features of Christian character and life. No religious body has any warrant to make as a term of communion that which has not an express sanction in the Divine Word; and none may, through their own vain notions, dare to affirm that any article of revealed truth is non-essential or unimportant. The Church,

besides, being one, though existing in different countries, it were desirable that her terms of communion were divested, as much as possible, of local peculiarities—while, at the same time, all her former scriptural attainments should ever be held in cherished remembrance, that thus race after race may show forth God's mighty deeds. In framing and adopting terms of communion—besides exhibiting great fundamental principles of Divine truth—which are of general application, and fitted for universal diffusion, regard should be had to former scriptural attainments—as well as to the testimonies of faithful confessors and martyrs—these being in themselves of great intrinsic value, and destined yet to experience a glorious revival, and a firm establishment throughout the nations.

The Terms of ecclesiastical communion of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland—maintained likewise in substance by those who have ecclesiastical connection with them in other lands, are the following:—

TERMS OF COMMUNION.

- I. The acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, to be the Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.
- II. The acknowledgment of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, to be founded upon, and agreeable to the Word of God.
- III. The owning of the Divine right and original of Presbyterian Church Government.
- IV. The acknowledgment of the perpetual obligation of our covenants, National and Solemn League; and in consistency therewith, the obligation arising from the renewal of these covenants at different periods by the Reformed Presbyterian Church.
- V. The owning of the scriptural testimonies and earnest contendings of Christ's faithful witnesses, whether martyrs under the last persecution, or of such as have succeeded them in maintaining the same cause; and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.
- VI. Practically adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour,

by walking in all His commandments and ordinances blamelessly.

An advowal of adhesion to these terms is required of every person on admission to membership; and, on occasion of dispensing the Lord's Supper, they are publicly read, illustrated, and defended. It is on the ground of embracing and faithfully holding them, that tokens of visible fellowship are handed to members of the church. These six terms, though comprehensive, are plain and easily understood. When properly considered, they will be seen to embrace the distinctive features of a faithful church. Having regard to scriptural attainments, reached after devoted effort and painful sacrifices, it is difficult to see how they could be reduced to fewer, or how any of them could be dispensed with, without doing injury to precious truth, and forfeiting some part of the church's costly privileges. These six terms declare concisely, but fully, the principal distinctive features of a true and faithful church. In lands like ours,—favoured with clear, scriptural light, and dedicated to God in covenant, a church to be found faithful, must be seen holding fast the laws and ordinances entrusted to her to keep, and in this way, advancing to higher attainments. "Thou hast given a banner to them that feared Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."* "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."†

A true church must be *scriptural* in its constitution, order, profession, and worship, and in the character and walk of its members. As "the pillar and ground of truth," it maintains the supreme authority of the Scriptures, and their universal application. It must have a settled *creed*, and is called to make a full *confession of her faith*, expressive of the unity in sentiment of its members, and their profession before the world. It has a *government* of laws and ordinances prescribed by its King, with officers appointed by Him to administer it. The church is a *covenant society*, owning the moral and scriptural deeds of ancestors, and maintaining their descending obligation. It is at the same time a *witnessing society*, owning the scriptural testimonies of former confessors and martyrs, and itself emitting a testimony in behalf of

* Ps. lx. 4.

† Philip. iii. 16.

precious truth, and against prevailing error. And, finally, the church's profession is throughout *practical*—its ordinances to be preserved pure and entire, and its ministers and members to be distinguished by holy living. It is befitting and proper to bring these comprehensive terms of communion—which exhibit the marked features of a true and faithful church, into prominent notice, on the occasion of sealing a religious profession in the sacrament of the Supper.

FIRST TERM.

In the first term of communion, we are required to admit that—1. “The Scriptures of the *Old and New Testaments* are the *Word of God*;” and 2. “That they are the *only infallible rule of faith and practice*.”

The importance of these two propositions, as the fundamental article of the church's profession, cannot be over-estimated. They declare that this profession is in every respect scriptural—that by the “measuring reed” of the Word, everything in the constitution, doctrine, worship, government, and practice of the church, is to be tried—and nothing to be retained, but what can plead express scriptural warrant: whatever has not the authority of the word of God is to be rejected. The Scriptures are throughout a divine revelation, and were given by the plenary inspiration of the Spirit. The Bible is a Divine-human book, as distinguished from Apocryphal writings and unwritten traditions. The Scriptures contain nothing but the word of God; and in them God has been pleased to reveal all that He saw needful for human salvation, and for the edification of the church throughout all ages. The Old Testament as well as the New, is the word of God, given for the instruction and nourishment of the church, and is an essential part of the divine directory for faith and conduct. In the second part of this term of communion, it is affirmed that holy scripture is “the *only infallible rule of faith and practice*.” This is a legitimate inference from the divine original of the Bible. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is *profitable*.” The Bible is the infallible rule of faith, in opposition to either the alleged infallibility of the church or of human reason, or the boasted supremacy of conscience. Those who have access to the word of God are responsible to God for their belief, since He has authoritatively spoken, and by this

word they shall be judged. The Scriptures are the sufficient and unerring rule for regulating our whole moral and religious conduct—for men in their social relations, as well as individuals. The Scriptures are the infallible directory in relation to civil offices and duties, as well as ecclesiastical. They exhibit civil government as divine in its origin—placed under the Mediator, as “Governor among the nations,” and as “ordained to men for good.” They present a perfect model of civil government—clearly define the qualifications essential to the character of civil rulers—limit their prerogatives, and enunciate their various duties, and exhibit the great ends of civil rule. The Bible is the statute-book of heaven ; and all, in whatever capacity—individuals and communities, are under the highest obligation to conform to it, their whole faith, and spirit, and conduct. The expediency and value of assuming this as the leading term of ministerial and Christian communion in the church, must be apparent to all who value purity of faith and worship, and who would regulate their civil and political relations by the laws of heaven, and who seek that all people and nations would submit themselves to the supreme rule of Him who speaks as a Sovereign in His word.

SECOND TERM.

“The acknowledgment of the Westminster Confession of Faith; and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, to BE FOUNDED upon, and agreeable to the Word of God.”

While the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, and the supreme standard of the church, there is need of a *subordinate, explanatory* standard. This we have in a creed of human composition, which defines the sense in which the doctrines of the Bible are understood and received. The Creed or Confession is the church’s agreed meaning of Holy Scripture. The necessity of such a creed arises from the duty of maintaining unity and communion in the church ; and it forms a common bond, by which the different sections of the visible church may be closely united, confessing the common faith, in one holy fraternity. A scriptural confession, instead of dishonouring the Bible, by substituting human authority for Divine, serves to illustrate and enforce the dictates of revelation. It claims the utmost deference to the Word of God, as it requires

that all that it contains is then only to be received after it has been submitted to this unerring test. Verbal confessions of faith must ever prove inadequate substitutes for those which are written, as they are vague and varying. They cannot efficiently promote unity in the faith—nor be subservient to that happy uniformity which the church is destined one day to attain. Judged by their *practical results*, the use of Confessions of Faith will be seen to be most valuable, since those who advocate and use them have been distinguished above others for intelligent acquaintance with the Scriptures, and for their practical application. They have been thereby preserved from prevailing error in doctrine, and been enabled to reach a happy unity and uniformity in doctrine, worship, and order. Instead of invading the right of private judgment, or violating Christian liberty, the proper use of a scriptural confession imposes a salutary restraint upon boundless licentiousness ; it prevents free-thinkers and libertines, under the pretence of liberty, from bringing disgrace on the Christian name, and it secures genuine liberty, whether ecclesiastical or civil, by resting its foundation on the Word of God, and regulating its exercise by its authoritative utterance.

The Westminster Confession and Catechisms—as they were adopted by the Reformed Covenanted Church of Scotland, we profess, in this term of communion, to be in all parts most accordant with Holy Scripture, and the doctrinal standards of the purest and best Reformed churches. We receive these documents as the standards of doctrine and order of the church, for all who are admitted to her communion, and not merely for ministers and office-bearers. A church, to have a standard at all, must have it known, and intelligibly held fast by its members, as well as its ministers and elders. The Westminster Standards, candidly considered, and compared with Holy Scripture, and one part with another, contain nothing that is intolerant and persecuting in sentiment. Charges of this kind, though often advanced, are incapable of proof. They are to be regarded as, in reality, brought against the Bible, rather than against the church's subordinate standards. The Westminster Confession and Catechisms have served the most valuable purposes, in preserving purity of faith and worship in the church. And as presenting a well-considered and comprehensive basis of scriptural uniformity, they are fitted to be the rallying standard around which the

scattered sections of the church, in this and other lands, will yet be gathered together.

THIRD TERM.

"Owning the Divine right and original of Presbyterian Church Government."

That the glorious Head of the church has prescribed to it a form of government separate from and independent of civil rule, and not left it destitute of a prescribed order, may be shown on rational grounds, and from the precepts and examples of inspiration. This government is not Diocesan Episcopacy, which was unknown in the Apostolic church—deprives the Christian people of their legitimate rights—is inefficient to preserve the church from the inroads of error and corruption, and to secure its unity, and often proves a means of oppression, and is without standing or warrant in the Word of God. Nor can the *Congregational* system of church government lay proper claim to Divine institution. It nullifies in the church the distinction between rulers and ruled—deprives ministers and church courts of official power; and regarding single congregations as churches, wholly independent of each other, it violates the unity of the church—is unable to stay the influx of dangerous error and disorder, and to provide effectively for the diffusion of the truth, and the universal establishment of the church in the earth. The *Presbyterian system*, in its grand outlines and principal features, can claim to be the institution of the exalted Head of the church; and by express precept and approved example, it is of Divine right and original. It provides for the fullest display of the supreme Headship of Christ, the Mediator—for maintaining unity in the faith—the scriptural rights equally of ministers and people—and for preserving scriptural discipline in the church. Under the Presbyterian form of church government is found at present the largest portion of the Protestant world. Many churches composed of converts from Romanism, Mohammedanism, and Heathenism—directed by the Word of God, voluntarily embrace the Presbyterian system—and it appears destined in future generations to yet much wider extension. Essential to the proper maintenance of the Presbyterian system is the exercise of scriptural discipline. Ministers and elders who profess it should see that they have the character and qualifications declared in the Word—and the

members of the church are under obligation to give, by their example, effect to the administration of government and discipline.

FOURTH TERM.

"The acknowledgment of the perpetual moral obligation of our Covenants, National and Solemn League, and consistently with this, the obligation arising from the renovation of these Covenants by the Reformed Presbyterian Church."

The church of Christ has, in all ages, been a *covenant society*, having its existence, administration, and privileges provided for in the covenant of grace; and also being, by solemn federal dedication, devoted to the service of Christ, and to the advancement of His glory. Covenants, whether individual or social, that are moral in their nature, are binding, till the great ends which they contemplate are effected. Incorporated bodies, whether nations or churches, are under law to God, and have a continued identity, and therefore their solemn engagements have a continued moral obligation. The covenants, National and Solemn League, were, in the strictest sense, national deeds, and being moral and religious in their nature, and entered into by the nation through its representatives, are perpetually binding. They are, in the words of an eminent Scottish martyr, "the marriage tie which has bound these nations to the Mediator, from which no power on earth can absolve them." It is the honour and privilege of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to recognize these federal deeds of our ancestors in the plenitude of their obligation, when others have cast them off and rejected them. Such recognition defines and limits our relation to civil and ecclesiastical society around us. We are thereby precluded from incorporating with a civil system, which is based on the overthrow of a system of scriptural civil rule, and from binding ourselves by oath to the maintenance of what was solemnly abjured by the nation. And having regard to these sacred engagements, we cannot unite in church fellowship with those who refuse to own, or who have cast off the covenant of the Lord God of our fathers. These covenants were eminently owned of God, in times of conflict and manifold trial, to effect a happy union and uniformity in the church in these lands—and to advance greatly pure and undefiled religion. Believing them yet destined to be "the reviving of Britain," we regard them as a tried scriptural basis of union, and ourselves as obliged to prosecute the great ends of them,

as the best means of promoting the welfare of the nation, and the peace, purity and prosperity of the church of Christ. The consistent renovation of these covenants by the Reformed Presbyterian Church at different times, exhibits a practical exemplification of the felt weight of sacred vows, and imposes a superadded sense of their moral obligation, and provides for future solemn public renewals, as often as the calls of Divine providence, and the circumstances of the church and nation, warrant the performance of the duty.

FIFTH TERM.

“Owning the scriptural testimonies, and earnest contendings of Christ’s faithful witnesses, whether martyrs under the last persecution, or such as have succeeded them in maintaining the same cause, and especially the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.”

A faithful church being in all ages a *witnessing society*, by holding this term, we identify ourselves with those who, in any past period, bore public testimony to any article of precious truth which was gainsayed or opposed—with those who, in the primitive age of Christianity, witnessed against legalism and Jewish ceremonies, and pagan idolatry—with martyrs under the Arian persecutions of the fifth and sixth centuries—with the numerous witnesses who contended unto blood against anti-christian error, idolatry and superstition—and especially with the Presbyterian confessors and martyrs in Scotland, who suffered in opposing Prelacy and arbitrary power, in bearing testimony for the universal Headship of Christ the Mediator, and for the spiritual independence of the church. Their testimonies, composed in prisons and scenes of great trial, and uttered on scaffolds and other places of suffering—though showing marks of human imperfection, were scriptural, seasonable, and remarkably owned of God for the maintenance and spread of important truth—and for animating others to keep the testimony of Jesus. In adopting this term of communion, we seek to cherish the spirit of the faithful martyrs of Christ, and to be identified with the scriptural testimony which, under various forms, has been borne by true servants of Christ, against error, idolatry, superstition and ungodliness—and particularly to account it our highest honour to witness in behalf of the royal prerogatives of Prince Messiah. The church’s public Judicial Testimony, while exhibiting in their due application the grand

principles of the martyr-testimonies, presents the substance of former faithful testimonies, and continues the testimony down to the present time—as uttered against all defection and apostasy, and all systems, whether civil or ecclesiastical, that are in stated opposition to the cause and kingdom of the Redeemer. Our highest honour is to be identified with Christ's faithful witnesses, even when testifying in sackcloth. Our most important work is to bear full and unswerving testimony in favour of all scriptural truth, and especially to the *present truth*—that which eminently concerns the Redeemer's glory, and which is a principal ground of reproach and suffering to God's servants.—“Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.” “I will give power to my two witnesses.” “And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony.” *

SIXTH TERM.

“ Practically adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, by walking in all His commandments and ordinances as blameless.”

The profession which we unitedly make, and which we seal at the Lord's table, is eminently *practical*. The fundamental principles of our testimony are doctrines according to godliness. Holding a full scriptural confession, and following in the footsteps of the martyrs of Christ, we should regard the place that we occupy as “holy ground.” We are required to “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour” in all things. Our life and spirit, instead of being doubtful and inconsistent, should be an ornament to religion, reflecting the mind of Christ, and attracting others to the fellowship of the gospel, and to a standard displayed for the truth. We are required to *walk* in the way of God's precepts, indicating activity and progress. And our walking should be “in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamlessly.” The sovereign authority of Zion's King, is to be constantly acknowledged and submitted to. We are to obey from the heart all the commandments of our God; and observe and keep pure and entire all His ordinances of worship and discipline—as well those which prescribe individual personal duties, as those which respect the social relations. The church is the “mountain of holiness;” and only those who have “clean hands and a pure heart, and who do not swear deceitfully,” may ascend the hill of God, and

* Isa. xliii. 10; Rev. xi. 3; xii. 11.

"have a sure abode within His tabernacle." On the ground of fully adopting and faithfully holding these terms of communion, those who come to the Lord's table have fellowship together—and, like the primitive Christians, are "of one heart and one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel."

Note, p. 181.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE EXERCISE OF WARNING AND INVITATION ;
OR, FENCING THE TABLES.

The object of the practice of WARNING, usually termed "FENCING THE TABLES," by the presiding minister, is to set a fence around the communion-table, to prevent the admission of unworthy communicants, and thus to save them from the sin and danger of eating and drinking condemnation to themselves. The reasons for such a service are weighty and important. The ordinance of the Supper is *distinguishing* and *sealing*. Its glorious Author has provided it for those who have a peculiar character, and has shown that it is not to be dispensed to all indiscriminately. Different from the Gospel-table which is furnished for all to whom its invitations and offers are addressed, the sacramental table is provided to such as are within the bond of the covenant, separated from the world, and are believers and servants of Christ. In the preparatory services that precede the administration of the Lord's Supper—such as preaching, the giving of tokens, and acts of discipline—all pains should be taken to discriminate character, and to deter the ignorant and ungodly from coming in a thoughtless and presumptuous manner to partake in a sacred feast, from which they can derive no real benefit, but will only aggravate their sin and increase their danger. Even when this has been done, formal and lukewarm professors are so prone to deceive themselves, and are so ready to assume "the form of religion," while they "deny the power thereof," that it is requisite to speak words of conviction to the conscience when persons are on the point of coming forward to the ordinance of the Supper; and, at the same time, weak, timid, and discouraged Christians require to have the invitations and promises of the word so presented, that they may be able to discover their warrant and welcome to partake of the feast of communion.

The two parts of this solemn exercise are—1. WARNING, for the purpose of self-examination and conviction of the

unworthy, to deter them from profaning the ordinance, and doing injury to themselves and others ; and 2. AUTHORITATIVE INVITATION of those who are the friends of Christ, on whom He desires to confer the benefits of His love and purchase. Both of these should be given by invoking in prayer the divine name, with an awful sense of God's presence, and an earnest seeking of the Spirit to search the heart, convince of sin, and to witness to believers their sonship, and their title to the privileges of the family of God. The prostitution of sealing ordinances by admitting freely to them persons who are ignorant, erroneous, and whose lives are opposed to scripture-requirement, is an evil too common in our day, and most detrimental to the profession and fellowship of Protestant churches. In the early days of the Scottish Reformation, we are told that on the communion Sabbath, at the time when the congregation was on the eve of engaging in the act of communicating at the Lord's table, it was customary for one of the most aged and venerable of the elders to proclaim aloud, "*Holy mysteries are alone for holy men.*" We should assume, as fundamental still, the same principle in admitting persons to the sacramental feast. "Holiness to the Lord" is in every case to be inscribed on the fence that is placed around the King's table. It is the badge written in the law ; it is the badge of admission to the special privileges of the gospel ; it is the badge written on the gates of heaven. The fellowship to be enjoyed is in each case inseparable from a holy character. Remembering that we have to do with the King, who comes in to inspect the guests, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and before whom sinners shall not stand,

1. *Warnings* should be explicitly and pointedly given. In opening this service, suitable portions of the divine Word may be read, either with or without comment, exhibiting the nature of sealing ordinances, descriptive of character, and showing those who, as being destitute of true Christian spirit, are without right to partake of the children's bread. Such are found in Ex. xix. 12, 13, and Ezek. xlivi. 10, 11. The warnings are to be plainly uttered, that, by the authority of the Master of the feast, those who are unfit to approach may be excluded. The ignorant, the unbelieving, the impenitent, and the disobedient, are plainly inadmissible to the Lord's table. Those who are without competent knowledge of the mysteries of salvation, and are destitute of any experimental knowledge of

these; such as have not received and appropriated Christ by faith, and such as being impenitent, not only wilfully break God's commandments, but are living habitually in the allowed omission of any commanded duty, are unprepared for communion in the ordinance, and are justly warned against the sin in this state of partaking in it. Believers themselves, who are negligent of self-examination—have not gracious affections in exercise—who are practising any secret sin—or are cherishing in heart malice or wickedness, are to be warned that it is at their fearful peril if, in such a state, they approach to this sacred ordinance. Light can have no fellowship with darkness, nor can Christ have any communion with Belial. Those who neglect self-examination, we are expressly told, do not "discern the Lord's body," and only "eat and drink judgment to themselves."

The warnings given in connexion with the administration of the Supper should have regard to a distinct testimony for *truth*, as well as for *purity* of profession and life. Hence it becomes proper to refer to the precepts of the Decalogue, in order to discriminate character, and as a means of excluding the unworthy. The moral law is given as "a rule of life in the hand of the Mediator." By this we should judge ourselves, lest we be judged and condemned. Ignorance of the nature and spirituality of the law characterizes the unregenerate; the unrepented violation of any of its precepts excludes from the kingdom of heaven. The Saviour plainly declares universal obedience to be the fruit of reconciliation: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you;" and that the happiness of His kingdom is only for the obedient: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (John xv. 9; Rev. xxii. 14).

Classifying the duties of the first table—they respect the OBJECT of worship—the MODE—the DIVINE NAME—and the TIME of special worship. Those should be warned as excluded, who deny the being, perfections, and providence of God as revealed in the Bible—God in trinity—or who live as practical atheists—acknowledging God in words, but in works denying Him. Again, those are to be deterred who worship God in any way not prescribed in His word, who abet idolatry and superstition—who take away, neglect, or corrupt ordinances of divine worship—who are chargeable with will-worship, and introducing

human inventions into instituted ordinances, and who do not habitually worship in all ordinances, public, social, and private the one living and true God, in spirit and in truth. Such as take the great and dreadful name of God in vain, who abuse the creatures, and pervert the word and ordinances of God, are plainly unfit for communion in the Supper. It has been justly observed, that the profanation of God's name, above most other sins, makes men volunteers of Satan ; and blasphemers, and the profane are shut out of the kingdom of God. Those who remember not the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy to the Lord ; who profane it by idleness and by worldly conversation, employments, and recreations ; and who, in any way, abet and promote great systems of Sabbath-desecration, are to be solemnly warned and excluded. The desecration of the Sabbath manifests despite of Heaven's richest boon, tends to corrupt and banish true religion, and exposes to divine judgments guilty transgressors, whether individuals or communities.

The duties of the Second Table may be likewise classified—as *relative*—those which *guard human life, personal purity, property, truth*; and the *internal principle of obedience*—in the prohibition of covetousness, uncharitableness, and discontentment. Due regard to second table duties is the evidence that those of the first have been recognized and obeyed. The grace that brings salvation effectually teaches to live “soberly” in relation to ourselves, “righteously” in regard to others, and “godly” in our spirit and life towards God. “*To be really holy is to be relatively holy.*” Those are to be warned and excluded who do not, in various relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals, act habitually on holy principles, and in a dutiful spirit—who practically disregard and violate the first commandment with promise. The neglect of filial duties influences for evil all other human relations. The sixth and seventh precepts of the Decalogue, according to the exposition of the great Lawgiver, are most comprehensive, taking account of the inward affections as well as the outward acts. Those are guilty of breaking them who injure or take away their own health or life, and the life or health of others, by murder, prodigality and vice ; by detracting and maligning character ; engaging in unjust wars ; countenancing and promoting drinking customs ; by acts of uncleanness, however secret ; by using the incentives to uncleanness—such as impure literature, profane songs and jests, frequenting promiscuous dances, theatres, etc. As indicating special divine

displeasure against the breaches of the seventh commandment, a greater number of terms are employed in the word to designate this sin than are employed in reference to any other precept, and they are expressly declared to be excluded from the kingdom of God who are chargeable with it. While in such a state they are plainly unworthy of access to the Lord's table. Dishonest persons—and such as by theft, idleness, prodigality, and deceit in business-transactions, injure the outward estate of themselves and others—are unfit to enjoy special Christian privileges ; and while thus acting, they are to be warned and excluded. Liars and false witnesses, such as do not cherish habitually a sacred regard to truth, who refuse to give testimony by oath when duly called, those who act as neutrals in the great cause pending between truth and error, and those who, as hypocrites, are habitual liars in action, are to be warned of their unfitness to come to this sacred ordinance. The like warning is to be addressed to all covetous, discontented, and uncharitable persons. Covetousness is declared to be idolatry ; and murmurers and the unmerciful are ever represented in the word as objects of divine displeasure, and exposed to rejection and the curse. The commandment is "exceeding broad," taking account of the thoughts and intents of the heart. "He who offends in one point is guilty of all." "He who breaks one of the least of the commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of God"—that is, shall have no place therein. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." The "divine measuring reed" is to be applied "to the temple, the altar, and to them that worship therein." By the influence of the Spirit, it will prove the means of awakening the conscience, of deterring from the commission of aggravated sin, and of preserving a divine ordinance from grievous corruption. As a scriptural warrant for such warning and exclusion, the following passages may be read ; when duly considered, they will be seen to be descriptive and condemnatory of even larger classes than have been particularly specified :—1 Cor. v. 8, vi. 9 ; Gal. v. 19-22 ; 2 Tim. iii. 1-9 ; Rev. xxi. 8, xxii. 11, 15.

2. INVITATIONS. The *authoritative invitations* to those who are called to the Marriage Supper should be plain and pointed. As they are offered on the eve of sitting down at the sacramental-table, they should be full, earnest, and tender. The servant, at supper time, is commissioned by the Master to

go forth to call the bidden guests, and, by constraining motives, to compel them to come in, that His house may be filled.

Those who, sensible of many violations of the divine law, *feel themselves to be self-condemned*, and “who tremble at God’s word,” are welcome to come. Jehovah, from His glorious throne, specially looks to the man that is “poor and contrite;” and such as, being chargeable with many and aggravated transgressions, are “washed, and sanctified, and justified,” are encouraged to partake of high and holy privileges (Is. lxvi. 2 ; 1 Cor. vi. 11). Those who have been in any measure *spiritually enlightened*, so as to see in the light of the Saviour’s glory their own vileness, and to experience the effects of saving knowledge in humbling and transforming them, are invited to come to an ordinance where they may obtain yet higher discoveries—where they may behold “the King in His beauty, and the land that is afar off.” *Believers*, exercising faith in the promise, however weak, are warranted to come to the feast, that, appropriating Christ and His salvation, they may get faith strengthened, and may realize its blessed fruits. Such have all encouragement to expect the highest privileges. “He that believeth hath everlasting life.” “He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.” The truly *penitent* are guests to be specially invited. The Passover was eaten with “bitter herbs ;” so the Lord’s Supper is to be partaken of with contrition of heart and godly sorrow for sin. Evangelical repentance is the certain fruit of a living faith, and is not a single act, but a habit of the soul. It is “*the tear that stands in faith’s eye.*” The feast is specially provided to comfort them that mourn ; it is designed to “fill the hungry with good things,” while “the rich are sent empty away.” Again, those are to be welcomed to the feast who desire to see the *amazing wonders of the Saviour’s incarnation and sufferings*, and the *glory of His person and work*. Angels ever desire to look into these things. The sacrament of the Supper is a chief means for exhibiting them in the fullest and most affecting manner. As we behold Him through this glass, with unveiled face, we are transformed into “the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Those who *love the unseen* Saviour with supreme desire and affection, are to be bid welcome to the feast of love, where they may embrace the Beloved of their souls, and give Him all their loves. Devoted *servants of Christ* have every encouragement to come to this

ordinance. Faithful attendance upon it is one of the highest and most acceptable pieces of service to a glorious Master. We come to the feast to know that His service is perfect freedom; to enjoy the honour of waiting on the King; and to experience His yoke, lined with love, to be "easy," and His burden to be "light." Here we find the truth of His gracious assurance, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be; if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (John xii. 26). Finally, such as desire *to put all honour upon Christ*, by *consecrating* themselves anew to Him, have the amplest invitation to this ordinance. Zion's daughters are commanded to go forth and "behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith He is crowned in the day of His espousals," that they may share with Him the gladness of His heart. Accepting Him anew as their Husband, Head, and Lord, they rejoice in His extensive dominion, and to see the crown of their own salvation flourishing upon Him. Ascribing to Him all glory and might, they do Him the highest honour, by yielding themselves wholly to Him. Thus, by heartfelt surrender and personal dedication, they crown Him Lord of all. When He calls to the heavens above, and to the earth, "Gather My saints together unto Me," those willingly respond who "have made a covenant with sacrifice;" and "the heavens shall declare His righteousness, and His people shall joy in His salvation" (Ps. l. 4, 5, 6). As a scripture-warrant for these invitations, exhibiting the character of those who are called by the Master of the feast, and presenting the welcome which faith and love will readily embrace in entering the banqueting-house, there may be read—Matt. v. 3-13; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Gal. v. 22-25; Is. lv. 1-4; Rev. xxii. 14, 17; Song ii. 8-14.

Note, p. 182.

III. THE SIMULTANEOUS OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER BY CHURCH MEMBERS.

The manner of dispensing the Lord's Supper in Presbyterian and some of the Protestant churches was very generally, till of late, by distributing the elements to groups gathered in succession at separate *tables*, and these were addressed one

after the other, by the minister who presided and assisted in the administration. This custom has been so long followed, and the term table has been so commonly applied to a particular company gathered together for participation in the sacramental feast, that to suggest a different mode of observing the ordinance, may be regarded by some as an innovation. There is, notwithstanding, as we think, strong ground to conclude, that the *simultaneous* distribution and partaking of the elements is sanctioned by scriptural usage, and likewise by the practice of the Scottish Church in the early period of the Reformation. There may be, in some cases, a difficulty in all the members of a congregation communicating at the same time, either from the large number of communicants, or from the arrangement of the seats in the house of worship. In such cases, the inconvenience of securing a joint attendance may properly justify a repetition of the service; but by a little consideration, and using the pews, at least in the centre of the house of worship, as a table, covering a portion of them with a linen cloth, the difficulty can be easily removed, and the method of dispensing the Supper would thus be brought into nearer conformity to the great objects of the feast—the practice of the Apostolic Church, and the usage of the Presbyterian Church, in its earliest period.

Communicants in assembling at the sacramental feast, gather together as *a family*, avowing the most intimate relation to each other. They profess, at the same time, mutual heartfelt affection. While they declare supreme love to Christ, they are called to show that they all are united as brethren, and that they love one another with a pure heart fervently. It is certainly better fitted to exhibit the intimacy of this relation and the strength and tenderness of this spiritual affection, that all should at once partake of the provision of the Father's house, than that they should be parted into separate groups, and come forward at different times to enjoy the common feast. In the one case, there is given the full expression of the closest union, and of endeared fellowship with the Head, and with one another;—in the other, there is, to say the least, the aspect of alienation, and of want of cordial loving intercourse. The communion of saints is a leading object of the ordinance; and our concern should be to exemplify it on the largest possible scale, and in the most perfect manner that is practicable. It is almost at the Lord's Supper alone, that the members of the

church meet for worship apart from a general audience, and as the feast is designed for the family of faith, that order should be adopted, by which the unity of its members is most significantly manifested. The act of simultaneous communicating would certainly seem better to comport with the apostle's representation of fellowship through the symbols in the ordinance, than the method of partaking at different times in separate groups. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."* In the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper given by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church, it seems to be implied that the members of the church partook at the same time of the sacramental feast, and that the abuses which the apostle reprobates, arose in part from the rich and poor eating at separate tables. "When ye come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper" †—and again, "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another." ‡ The inspired accounts of the celebration of the Supper contained in the book of Acts, agree best with the practice of simultaneous partaking, and are incongruous with the dispensation of the ordinance to a number of groups of worshippers, assembled at separate tables. Whether as observed very frequently by the disciples in Jerusalem after the day of Pentecost, or in other places, as at Troas, when Paul preached in an upper chamber, § the inspired narrative is certainly more consistent with the idea of the Supper being dispensed at once to all the brethren assembled, than with that of a protracted service, in which separate companies partook, and were addressed in succession.

In the "*Book of Common Order*," used by John Knox, and followed generally by the Church of Scotland during the period of the First Reformation, the mode of administration is thus stated—"The day when the Lord's Supper is ministered—which commonly is used once a month, or so oft as the congregation shall think expedient, the minister useth to say as follows, etc. etc. (the excluding of the unworthy)—'The exhortation ended, the minister cometh down from the pulpit, and sitteth at the table; every man and woman likewise taking their place as occasion best serveth. Then he taketh bread

* 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 33.

† 1 Cor. xi. 20.

§ Acts xx. 7.

and giveth thanks. This done, the minister breaketh the bread and delivereth it to the people, who distribute and divide the same among themselves, according to our Saviour Christ's commandment, and likewise giveth the cup. During the which time, some place of the scripture is read, which doth lively set forth the death of Christ, to the intent that our eyes and senses not only be occupied in these outward signs of bread and wine, which are called the visible word, but that our hearts and minds also may be fully fixed in the contemplation of the Lord's death, which is by this holy sacrament represented. The action thus ended, the people sing the 103d Psalm, or some other of thanksgiving; which ended, one of the blessings before-mentioned is recited; and so they rise from the table and depart."* In the *Westminster Directory*, adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland—and extensively followed by the Presbyterian Church in all lands—the order prescribed is evidently adapted to simultaneous participation in the ordinance. It is noteworthy, that there is no mention of "tables" at which the communicants sit in separate parties, but of "one table" which may, in many cases be better formed out of the pews in which the worshippers sit to hear the word, than by a separate structure. "After this exhortation, warning and invitation, the table being before decently covered, and so conveniently placed, that the communicants may orderly sit about it, or at it, the minister is to begin the action with sanctifying and blessing the elements of bread and wine set before him, etc. etc."†

It may be added, that by the practice of simultaneous partaking—the communicants occupying their pews, the minister can much more conveniently address them than when, if seated at tables, the backs of some of them are towards him; and that thus too, the disturbance and confusion in the congregation caused by numbers coming to and retiring from separate tables, is avoided.

* Works of John Knox, vol. vi. pp. 324–326.

† *Westminster Directory*—Of the celebration of the communion or sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

ADDITIONAL NOTES IN REFERENCE TO ROMISH AND
RITUALISTIC PERVERSIONS.

The Doctrine of the Lord's Supper—as held by the Primitive Church, and by some of the Early Fathers.

“This doctrine was not clearly developed, although it was generally realized, that the Lord's Supper was a most holy mystery, that the body and blood of the Lord was mystically connected with the bread and wine, and that those who in faith partook of this meal enjoyed essential communion with Christ. On this supposition alone, we account for the reproach of the heathen, who spoke of the sacrament as feasts of Thyestus. Ignatius calls the Lord's Supper a φάρμακον ἀθανασίας, and admits εὐχαριστίαν σάρκα εἶναι τοῦ σωτῆρος; Justin says: σάρκα καὶ 血液 εἰδιδάχθημεν εἶναι. According to Irenæus, it is not “communis panis, sed eucharistia ex duabus rebus constans terrena et celeste;” and in consequence of partaking it, our bodies are “jam non corruptibilia spem resurrectionis habentia.” Tertullian and Cyprian also adopt similar views, while at the same time they represent, in some passages, the Lord's Supper rather as a symbol. Clement and Origen consider that it is the object of the Lord's Supper that the soul should be fed by the Divine Word.”—“The History of the Church of Christ,” by Rev. Islay Burns. Appendix, p. 302.

The Sacrificial Theory.

“When once the idea of a priesthood had gained a footing, the cognate notion of a sacrifice could not for any time be kept out. The Lord's Supper offered several points of connection for this view. First, the *consecrating prayer*, which was regarded of such importance as to give its name to the whole service (*εὐχαριστία*), might be regarded as a spiritual sacrifice; next, names derived from terms applied to sacrificial worship were given to those offerings which the congregations made for behoof of the Lord's Supper (*προσφοραί* oblations). And as the *congregation* brought its gifts for the Lord's Supper, so the *priest* offered them again in the Lord's Supper; and to this act also the terms *προσφέτειν*, *ἀναφέτειν*, were applied. Ultimately, as the prayer, so the Lord's Supper itself was designated as *θυσία*, *sacrificium*, although at first only in a figurative sense.”—Kurtz.

Note, p. 136.

Romish Perversions—Denying the Cup to the Laity.

The following clear statements, by *Stillingfleet*, show in what way the Romish mutilation of the sacrament of the Supper was introduced :—

“The custom of denying the laity the sacramental cup, and the doctrine that it is lawful to do so, who can pretend to derive from apostolic tradition? Especially when the Council of Constance—the patron of it, confesses that Christ’s institution was under both kinds, and that the faithful in the primitive church received it in both. *Liceat Christus*, etc. Although Christ, after His supper, instituted and administered this venerable sacrament under both kinds; although in the primitive church, this sacrament was received by the faithful, under both kinds—*non obstante*, etc.—yet all this notwithstanding, this custom, for the avoiding of scandals (to which the primitive church was as obnoxious as the present is) was upon just reason brought in, that the laity should receive only under one kind.”

“Brought in, therefore, it was, and so is one of those doctrines which *Leriensis* calls *inducta non tradita—inventa non accepta*, etc.; therefore all the doctrine of the Roman Church does not descend from apostolical tradition. But if this custom came not from the apostles, from what original may we think that it has descended? Certainly from no other than from the belief of the substantial presence of whole Christ under either kind. For this opinion being once settled to the people’s minds, that they had as much by one kind as by both—both priest and people quickly began to think it superfluous to do the same thing twice at the same time; and thereupon being (as I suppose) the custom required, that the bread should be received first—having received that, they were contented that the priest should save the pains, and the parish the charge of unnecessary reiteration.”

Note, p. 247.

Frequent Observance of the Lord’s Supper and its benefits.

In the Works of CHARNOCK—one of the most distinguished of the Puritan writers—are several excellent discourses on the

ends and subjects of the Lord's Supper, and on preparation for observing it. From that on "*The End of the Supper*," we give the following extracts, in corroboration of the argument in this treatise in relation to *frequent communicating*—which, though rather lengthened, deserve to be carefully perused, from the value and importance of the matter:—

"The Lord's Supper is to be frequently celebrated and participated of. *As often*, implying it ought often to be done. For explication—

"1. How often is not determined. There is no fixed time for the administration of this prescribed by any precept, nor day commanded for it; but the celebration of it on the Lord's day was the primitive practice. No day fitter, in regard to its separation to God, in regard of public meeting, in regard of remembrance, both of the death of Christ, and His resurrection; the battle and the victory, His death in the Supper, His resurrection in the day. Nor how often on that day is it determined by any precept, whether weekly or monthly. The performance is commanded by Christ—"Do this in remembrance of me," is urged by the apostle in this chapter, but how often is not prescribed. God was more punctual in the Jewish sacraments; circumcision was fixed on the eighth day, the Passover annually in March.

"2. Nor can there be a constant time fixed for every particular person; because there are varieties in the cases of good men, who may, by some emergency, find themselves hindered one time and not another. Sometimes men's various callings administer to one more distractions than the calling of another, that they cannot rightly dispose themselves, nor spend so much time as is necessary to a due preparation; and there is more fruit by one sacrament, when men come with a suitable frame, than by a hundred slightly approached into. Though the Passover was annually fixed, and under a severe penalty to be celebrated, yet there was a dispensation allowed to those who were under ceremonial uncleanness, or engaged in business on a journey—Numb. ix. 13; but those were diversions brought upon them by the providence of God, not contrived by themselves, which rendered them excusable. If man had left his journey at that time which he might have performed at another, and had delayed it on purpose that he might avoid the attendance on that ordinance, I question whether he had been within the compass of God's indulgence. Yet in those cases,

though they were dispensed with at the first celebration of it on the fourteenth day of the first month, they were ordered to keep it the fourteenth day of the next month, and not to stay till the next annual revolution—Numb. ix. 10, 11. Yet we find the Passover omitted all the time they were in the wilderness, as well as circumcision; and some observe that there was but one Passover kept all the time of Joshua. And so great were the corruptions in the Jewish Church, that when Josiah came to the crown, in the eighth year of his age, and began in the eighth year of his reign to set his heart towards God (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3), yet it was ten years before he could prepare them to keep the Passover, which was kept in the eighteenth year of his reign (2 Chron. xxxv. 19). It was commendable in him to restore it, sinful in the people to neglect it, since it was settled by a plain and standing command.

“ 3. It was anciently often participated of; some * think every day, from that of Acts ii. 46—‘ They continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,’ in analogy to the daily sacrifice in the temple. Others understand it of their frugal and charitable entertainments of one another. That it was every Lord’s day, is out of the question, by the ancient writings declaring the custom of the church. And Acts ii. 42, the breaking of bread, which is understood by most of the sacramental bread, is joined with doctrine. They would lay in a *viaticum* and provision in those hard and stormy times, when they expected to be snatched away by the fury of persecutors before the next day of public meeting. And this was their custom, to join this to other acts of worship on the Lord’s day, Acts xx. 7: ‘ And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.’ This was afterwards kept up in the church in the time of Justin Martyr, and by some in the time of Austin (Augustine), long after the other, which practice was perhaps grounded on Ezek. xlivi. 27—‘ And it shall be upon the eighth day, and so forward, the priest shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings, and I will accept you, saith the Lord’—a prophecy of gospel times, and the cessation of the ceremonial law of daily sacrifices. By burnt-offerings being meant the Lord’s Supper—the remembrance of the great burnt-offerings, whereby our peace was made; and by peace-offerings, prayer and thanksgiving,

* Mr Joseph Mede.

which are called sacrifices in Scripture—Heb. xiii. 15 ; and on the Lord's day, being the eighth day, following upon the seventh, the Jewish Sabbath. It is likely it is not absolutely necessary that it should be administered every Lord's day, when the word is preached. The Passover, the Jewish sacrament, was but annual, though Moses—the law of Moses—was read every Sabbath in the synagogue. The celebration came to be more seldom, because the frequency of it begat a coldness in the affections of the people, and the commonness occasioned too much contempt of it. The esteem and reverence of this ordinance was dashed upon this rock. The duty is extraordinary ; they are *tremenda mysteria*. Great preparations are necessary to great duties ; affections must be much exercised, which are wound up to a higher pitch by the novelty and rarity, and flag by the commonness of an excellent thing. The commonness of fasts, in our days, and even at this time, hath driven true humiliation almost out of doors.

" 4. Yet to be frequent in it is agreeable to the nature of the ordinance, and necessary for the wants of a Christian. By too much fasting, we often lose our stomachs. The Passover, indeed, was annual—God fixed it to that time ; but they had their daily sacrifices in the temple, which were types of Christ, and remembrances to them of what was in time to be exhibited. We have none but this settled by Christ, as an ordinance of commemoration of what hath been exhibited ; therefore we ought not, for the time, to conform ourselves only to an annual custom. It is not to be neglected out of a wilful contempt, or a pretence of humility. Disobedience is not a part of humility, but the fruit of pride against God ; and though a sense of unworthiness may be so great as to hinder a free and cheerful approach, and deter for a time, yet there ought to be endeavours to get rid of those clouds. We must ask not in lazy and idle complaints. That is no true sense of our own unworthiness, which hinders us from a necessary duty.

" Frequent it should be. The too much deferring doth more hurt than the frequent communicating. The oftener we carefully and believably communicate, the more disposed we shall be for it. Abstinence from it can never be good, but *ex accidente*, either for defect of a due disposedness, or to excite a greater reverence ; but to communicate believably is good, *per se*, in itself. Now, that which is good in itself, is to be preferred before that which is good accidentally. If we abstain

from it for reverence, we may the rather come for reverence ; for if it be worthily received, it increaseth our reverence of God, and affection to Him. That is the best reverence of God which owns His authority.

“ It ought not to be neglected upon these reasons :—
 1. *Because of the Author.* It is a feast of God’s providing to which He invites us ; to neglect it is a contempt of God’s rich provision and gracious condescension. The great God appointed not any trifling ordinance ; His wisdom appoints none but what His power can make worthy instruments ; His goodness will appoint none but what His love will make highly beneficial ; the contempt of it is a slighting both of His wisdom and grace. It is a command immediately from Christ, and the command of God, who hath approved of Him, and every thing He did, and set His seal to this commandment of our Saviour, and all the rest. Had it not been agreeable to His Father’s will, He had not been advanced to His regal dignity, to sit upon His throne. It is Christ’s command, whom we are bound to obey, by virtue of our allegiance to Him, by virtue of the salvation we hope for by Him, by virtue of the affectionate obligations we have received from Him. It is His command whom we must own as our Lord, if we expect Him as our Saviour ; Luke xxii. 19 : ‘ This do in remembrance of me.’ It is not left at liberty—*do if you will, but this do.* He is our Lord, and He is our Saviour ; not only our Saviour, but our dying Saviour. If His death should be valued as the ground of our happiness, His legacies are to be esteemed as a part of our privilege. He that was going to lay down His life for us, would not appoint what was unnecessary for our present state ; yea, were it of no use to us, it is enough that it hath His sanction, whose sole authority deserves to be remembered by us.

“ 2. The *time* when Christ instituted it, shows it not worthy of our neglect. It was a little before His death. 1 Cor. xi. 23—‘ The same night in which He was betrayed, He took bread.’ Good men (much less would a good and bountiful Saviour) do not use to employ themselves in trivial concerns, when they are near expiring. That which was instituted, when wrath began visibly to march against Him, Judas upon the point of betraying Him, and is to continue till His second coming, is not without a desirable fruit. Had it been a needless ceremony, He would not have breathed out a word for its

institution ; had it been an institution of a light concern, some other would have been chosen by Him for the settlement of it. We may gather the necessity, as well as the value of it, from the time of its institution, which shows that there is something worthy in it of our esteem, and undeserving our neglect. The last words, actions, legacies of dying friends, are never thought matters wholly to be neglected. Joseph's brethren questioned not their pardon from Joseph for the injury they had done him, when they used so powerful an argument as the command of their dying father—Gen. 1. 16, 17 : ‘Thy father did command before he died ;’ and shall we undervalue, by a wilful neglect, the commands of a dying Saviour, settled by Him just before He went to remove the wrath of God from us upon Himself?’

“3. The *ends* of it declare the unworthiness of neglecting it. (1) The remembrance of Christ. This was the end, and twice repeated—1 Cor. xi. 24, 25—in the giving the bread, ver. 24; in the cup, ver. 25. We are naturally unmindful of God, ungrateful to Christ ; we need something to renew our remembrance of Him. He hath left us this dark glass, wherein we may see His face till He returns with a full glory ; and is it an affection to Him never to look upon His picture—the medal of Himself, wherein He hath engraven the tracts of His dying love—all that He did, all that He purchased, all His fulness, all His treasures, wherein we may behold Him as a Redeemer, pouring out His blood for us, as a Sanctifier pouring His blood into us ; as a Benefactor opening His enriching treasures to us ; as a Supplier providing for all our wants. How can we say we love Him, if we do not mind Him ? What value have we for Him, if He be not in our thoughts ? Well, but we may remember Christ, otherwise without this ordinance. We may, but do we ? Do you frequently ponder upon Him ? are your thoughts of Him edged with choice and ravishing affections to Him ? doth not the body of death hinder you from thinking of the Lord of life ? But suppose you are not one minute forgetful of His love, doth it consist with your professed affection to Him, to choose your own ways of remembering Him, and neglect His ? Suppose we had a friend who had redeemed us from the gallows, restored us from servitude, redeemed our lives, installed us in a larger inheritance, and was to take a long journey, promising to return again, leaving with us his picture, which he would have us look upon at some special

seasons, and express in that method a particular mindfulness of him. Though we could not without an inexcusable ingratitude forget him, had we not that picture, yet it were but an unworthy return to deny the observance of so small an order to a friend to whom we owe ourselves. This is all the picture Christ hath left of Himself. Is it not ingratitude to neglect the remembrance of Him in His own method, when He might have put hard conditions upon us?

2. “*It is a seal of the covenant.* It is not only a sign which represents, but a seal which confirms the benefit ; not a bare picture, but a seal whereby pardon, and the whole design of salvation is passed over to us. Luke xxii. 28, ‘This cup is the New Testament of my blood, which is shed for you.’ It is a confirmation of the rich charter of God. There is a conveyance, *take, eat, take, drink* ; *take* Christ with all His treasures, with all His graces. This is a pledge of the promise, a power given you for the glory to be bestowed upon you. He seals it to the eye by the elements, and to a believing heart by the Spirit. It seals not the truth of the death of Christ, or the truth of your faith. It supposes faith in the communicant, and supposeth the death of Christ in the institution ; but it seals the right of faith, and the interest of faith. It is a seal of the righteousness of faith, of the interest of faith in that righteousness it lays hold on, as the seal of a deed seals the right and interest of the person in that land conveyed to him by the deed. What there is in Christ is sealed to us in the sacrament for our comfort ; the privileges He hath purchased, and the graces He is endowed with ; and when you have this seal, you have arguments for prayer and power to enforce them. ‘Lord, here is Thy bow in the cloud, a sign that Thou wilt not drown the world ; here is Thy seal in the sacrament, a sign that Thou wilt not charge my sin upon me, which hath been charged upon my Saviour. It was told me that it was a body broken for me, blood shed for me. I have taken it upon this account, I have taken this seal, I have covenanted to obey this ; I am willing and desirous, and I will be industrious to do it ; be a God keeping covenant with me and truth for ever. The honour of God lies at pawn in His soul, whereby strong consolation cannot be denied to those that lay hold upon Christ in it. Should this then, that is so desirable and confirming a seal be neglected, which we may believably plead as God’s act and deed, when it is not a bare stamp of a seal,

which signifies nothing but the image upon the seal ; a seal to a deed which gives the assurance of the advantages in the deed, and an interest in the contents of the deed, and what is conveyed by it ?

8. "It is a *renewing of our covenant with Him*. It is a federal rite wherein God exhibits, on His part, Christ and His benefits to us, and we profess our subjection and obedience to Him, laying more solemn vows upon ourselves ; whence they are called sacraments—the word signifying a military oath, whereby soldiers oblige themselves to be true to their generals, and the cause they fought for. Covenants are always mutual—something to be done by us as well as for us. God seals the benefits of the covenant on His part, and we seal to the duties of the covenant on ours. It strengthens us in the assurance of the benefits promised, and engageth us to a performance of the duties required. The exhibiting of the signs is the seal on God's part ; our receiving the signs is the seal on our part. By taking them, we acknowledge that we stand to the conditions, and restipulate with God again that we will be His ; and upon this striking hands with God, we claim a right, and lay hold upon His seals, and plead them. You avouch God to be your God, Deut. xxvi. 16-18, obliging yourself to a greater distance from sin, and detestation of it ; divorce from it to a more quickened obedience, vigorous faith, holy life, and exalted service ; fetching strength from the death of Christ in the Supper to this end. Is not this desirable, to be in covenant with God, to have God in covenant with us, to have it more assured on both parts, which is the felicity and security of a creature ?

4. "It is a *communion with God*. There is in this action more communion with God (though not the sole act of communion, as some say), than in any other religious act. Prayer is an act of homage ; praise an act of gratitude. We have not so near a communion with a person, either by petitioning for something we want, or returning him thanks for a favour received, as we have by sitting with him at his table, partaking of the same bread, and the same cup. In all nations, the nearest fellowship consists in acts of this nature. The eating of the Supper, as the eating of sacrifices, is a federal rite between God and the believer, signifying that there is a covenant-friendship between Him and them. It is the Lord's table, and what feasted and cheered the heart of God in heaven—that is,

the body and blood of Christ, God gives us to feast our souls on earth, so that we do in a manner eat and drink with Him in this love-banquet. ‘Take, eat,’ manifests a communion ; Christ is really presented to us, and faith really takes Him, closes with Him, lodgeth Him in the soul, makes Him an indweller ; and the soul hath a spiritual connection with Him in His life and death, as if we did really eat His flesh and drink His blood presented to us in the elements. Eating signifies taking in Christ as our own, His righteousness and whatsoever is His in communion with Him. Is this a privilege to be neglected ? To sit at God’s table, partake of His dainties—that which He doth most highly value, and deserves the value of the creature infinitely above the sitting at the table of the greatest monarch on earth ; that which was the sweet savour to God upon the cross, is offered to us as a feast upon the table ; and we eat that body and drink that blood which atoned God, and thereby have a communion with Him in His pleasure and delight.

4. “The *benefits* of the ordinance requires frequency. These benefits are many.

“1. The *weakening of sin*. The lively representation and consideration of the death of Christ, with all its circumstances, is a strong incentive and assistance to the mortifying of sin in us ; and there is no branch of the body of death, but some consideration or other fetched from the death of Christ, hath a virtue to destroy. How can any be proud, when he sees Christ lay down His life in the form of a mean man ; how can he be coveteous, when he sees Christ turning His back upon the profits of the world ? Christ upon the cross, viewed by a sparkling eye of faith, would work the same effect in our souls, which the looking upon the serpent in the wilderness wrought in the Israelites’ poisoned bodies, expelling the venom from the vitals, and out-works of the members, and abating the fury of a corrupt paroxysm. The word declares the evil of sin, and the sacrament shows it in the person of our Saviour ; sin is known by the word to be deadly, and it is seen to be so in the Supper. Then is the soul most affected by sin, when God’s indignation against it is manifested—when it beholds Christ made a curse, and bearing all that the law denounceth against sin, and sees the desert of sin, and the terms of wrath. Never doth sin look so ghastly, and repentance so sorrowful, as when Christ and the soul meet together in this ordinance.

The looking upon Christ opens the spring of sorrow. Zech. xii. 10. In this we take a crucified Christ, that we may have crucified sins. The very approach to this ordinance kindles resolutions against corruption, and smothers the flames of sin in the soul. Who that understands the nature of sin, and the evil consequents of it would be without such a benefit? Are there no invading temptations to be rooted out—no indwelling sins to be expelled, no distractions to be settled? Is there not still a root of bitterness always sprouting, an inward serpent always brooding, an Egyptian furnace in our hearts, sending out its sparks? Must not the root be more withered, the poison cast out, the indwelling sin tamed, the furnace quenched? Do we not then need all the assistances to faith in the mortifying death of Christ? As Christ upon the cross expiated sin, so Christ in the Supper mortifies sin by His Spirit, and purgeth those iniquities which are as a veil between the face of God, and the joy of our souls. Faith acts more lively against its enemy, when it considers that the blood was shed for the soul, as to justify, so to sanctify.

“2. *Nourishment of the soul.* In regard of the insensible decay of the spirits of the body, there is need of a continued supply to recruit them, and keep them up in their due vigour; our souls stand in no less need of being succoured by a feast of fat things full of marrow. By a believing participation of Christ in the sacrament, we are turned into the image of Christ, and nourished up by it to eternal life. His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed (John vi. 55). He is given us as nourishment: ‘Take, eat, this is my body’—as nourishment to be incorporated with us. The bread is the sign of His body, and His body is the bread of the soul. The element conveys vigour to the body, and the thing signified strength to the soul, and recruits it with new spirits. What bread and wine do physically convey to the body, which is strength, comfort, nourishment, that doth the body and blood of Christ by faith convey to the soul, quickening, comforting, strengthening, cherishing grace. As the new creature is brought into being only by the power of Christ, so it is maintained by the blood of Christ only, and Christ hath provided this to be both our meat and our medicine, our food and our antidote to revive our soul, and cure and prevent our diseases, to repair the decays which the remainder of sin and evil; humours cause in our souls. It is not a naked remembrance,

that would be in breaking the bread and pouring out the wine, by which actions are signified the death of Christ ; but nutrition is intended, therefore the bread is eaten, the wine drunk. If we would not contemn the food of our bodies, which common providence prepares for us, have we any more reason to contemn the food of our souls, which rich grace provides for us ?

“ 3. *Increase and exercise of grace.* Christ is the storehouse and fountain of all the treasures of life and peace ; but His ordinances are the channel. Though Christ hath treasures to enrich us, yet He will choose the way of conveyance Himself. Grace is increased by Christ ; He is the Finisher as well as the Author—Heb. xii. 2, and therefore the increase of it, laying by degrees one stone upon another, till He complete it by the top stone ; dressing the plant to a greater flourishing. This ordinance, therefore, is of frequent use for the building up and bringing forth more lively fruits. The elements, bread and wine, are not only nourishing, but strengthening, and so is the thing signified by them. Some speak of a garden of balsam trees in Egypt, which bring forth no fruits except they be watered from a neighbouring fountain, wherein the blessed Virgin was reported often to have washed the infant Saviour. This is true of grace, the balsam tree in the soul, which will not thrive unless watered by the blood of Christ. Faith is increased thereby ; as the oftener the Word is heard, so the oftener sacraments are used, the more doth faith thrive. If we come with weak grace, and strong breathings, we may return with strong grace and full satisfaction. Sacraments are the marts wherein we trade for an increase of our stock, as well as the word. Since, therefore, we are subject to decays, and liable to changes and wants in our spiritual condition, we stand in need of a rooting and establishing ordinance. It is an ordinance wherein grace is much exercised, and more unitedly about its object, Christ ; and were there no other advantage than this, to have an opportunity to strike up all our graces together—our clasping faith, and melting repentance, our flaming love, and our nimble desires—it were enough to make the ordinance itself desirable to a Christian, since there is an unspeakable comfort in the very sound of Him. But so excellent an ordinance cannot be without a more excellent benefit.

“ 4. *Sense and assurance of love* often comes in by it. In

no ordinance is Christ so particularly applied. ‘Take, eat, this is my body.’ Christ was known by the breaking of bread, when the disciples knew Him not before in His opening the Scripture—Luke xxiv. 30, 31. Gladness attended the keeping of the passover, 2 Chron. xxi. 26. Great joy, then, in Jerusalem, not in the neglect of it. The primitive Christians continued in their ‘gladness of heart’ by breaking bread from house to house’ (Acts ii. 46); much more surely by breaking bread with Christ in the Supper. It is the most probable time of the Spirit’s performing the great office, which is to bring to remembrance, when they are engaged in an ordinance, whose chief design is to bring Christ in His expiatory death to remembrance. When the office of the Spirit, and the word of the institution meet together, it is the most likely time for the Spirit to exercise His office, and join in with the end of the sacrament, to show the high and heavenly things of our Saviour. There is a sweetness in a promise, but more in a promise drawn into covenant with all its ramifications. God’s seal as well as His oath, is for confirmation. His word is sufficient; but lest that should be staggered at, He hath added His oath; if that should leave any doubt, He hath fixed His seal—all which are the highway to a comfortable assurance. God hath in this given us a pledge of His love, and a ground of assurance, when we have Christ painted clearer in His sufferings and His love—visibly represented as made a curse in our stead, a sacrifice bearing our sins in His body, and expiating them by His blood, and this Christ taken into our souls, and pleaded to God as our security. Thus hath Christ given His body for us, and left His body with us a pawn or pledge for all we want—for all the good we can hope for. Sense of His love must be great when the soul considers that His blood satisfied God, and may well satisfy it. When we eat and drink believably, our souls delight themselves in fatness. And as the heart of God was satisfied with Him upon the cross, so the heart of a Christian is often replenished by Him at a sacrament. What the gospel presents in words, the sacrament doth in signs; what the word presents to the ear, the Supper doth to the eye, to the taste, that we may have comfort come in at all our senses. How often have drooping spirits met with comfort in the very action; and met with hidden manna in sacramental bread, like a glorious Christ in a human body, and have had a full sense of a Saviour’s love accompanying the visible

representation of it ! How often have His people heard Him in it speak peace to them, and breathe peace in them, and kiss them with the kisses of His mouth ! How often have their consciences been purified, and their weeping joy found an elevation ? There have been mutual glances. Christ hath struck a beam upon the soul, imparted a clearer stamp of love, and the soul hath clasped its arms about the Saviour. Is such an ordinance fit to be neglected ?

“ 5. *Union to Christ is promoted.* As the bread and wine are physically united to us, so we are spiritually united to Christ, Christ incorporating Himself with us in a sacrament. He was our Surety on the cross, He is our Advocate in heaven, and incorporated with us in a spiritual, not a transubstantiate manner : ‘ I am thine ’—John xvii. 23, 26. Can we too often clasp about Him ; can the union be often renewed, and become too close and strait ? ”

The consideration of these special benefits resulting from the right use of the sacrament of the Supper furnishes the strongest motives for its frequent observance.

ADDRESSES AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

No. 1.

Song ii. 3—"As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

Communicants!—We cordially welcome you to the banqueting-house, and to the King's table. We rejoice to meet with you here—gathered as we are from different places and scenes in the wilderness; and earnestly would we seek that we may have "fellowship one with another," and that we may be enabled, from the experience of the heart, to declare—"Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." In this sacramental feast, Christ Jesus is "All in All"—the author and institutor of the ordinance—He who presides over the administration—and Himself the soul-satisfying provision. All that we need and can desire is to be found in Him; and we have come hither, that we may know and appreciate His excellency; and have the realized enjoyment of His fulness. He alone is the Alpha and Omega of all our duty, privilege, and praise.

In the precious words which we have just read, the Saviour is set forth in His surpassing excellency and attractive beauty. He is spoken of in the spirit and language of joyful appropriation, and commended for the eminent privileges and blessings which He confers—the matter of believing, heartfelt experience. "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved," etc. These are the words of the Spouse, the ransomed church of Christ, or of the individual believer, expressive of the inmost devout thoughts of the mind, and of the full estimate of the renewed spirit. In the second verse, the Beloved had commended the beauty of the Spouse—"As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." She is thus displayed as resembling Christ—lovely, fruitful, pure, and fragrant—even amidst corruptions, troubles and reproaches, and the enmities of the wicked. Humbled under the sense of her own unworthiness, she seeks to avert the view from herself, and to centre all the thoughts and affections upon Him to whom she owes everything, and who is the matchless object of her highest esteem and supreme affection. In words of

glowing fervour, she gives Him, in preference to all else, the highest commendation. She gratefully records her experience of unspeakable benefits which she had received from Him—as she ardently desires the renewal of such distinguishing favour. A like experience is befitting us this day in coming to the Lord's table. If we would enjoy fellowship with the Master of the feast, and communion with saints in the ordinance, we must make the same open and joyful profession.

First, Christ Jesus is confessed and embraced, as the *Best and only Beloved*. In Himself, He is intrinsically excellent, and infinitely deserving. But, as we cannot comprehend or declare positively His transcendant dignity and glory, He is set forth by way of comparison. “*As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood.*” This is the generic name of a valuable fruit-bearing tree of different species in Eastern lands—including the citron, pomegranate, and orange tree—distinguished for wide-spreading, cooling shade, and for luscious and refreshing fruit. The apple-tree is not majestic as the oak, or stately and strong as the fir-tree and the cedar; but, though in some aspects mean and unsightly, none of the trees of the forest yields together the like cooling shadow and pleasant nourishing fruit. Thus Christ, the Beloved of the soul, excels all others among the sons. He has properties, and serves purposes to us which are not found among any of men’s sons, however fair or mighty, or among angels—the first born Sons of God. None of these can sustain to us the same endearing relations, or bestow on us the blessings which we unspeakably need, and which He is ever ready to confer. We glory in Him as our own Beloved—ever dear to our hearts, and surpassing in worth and glory all others.

His excellency is seen in the *shade* which He furnishes for protection and refreshment. He is to His people, “a tabernacle from the heat”—a covert from storm and tempest—a defence from enemies and dangers—the “shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” This shade is provided as a refuge for awakened sinners—a shelter and hiding-place for believers under affliction and persecution—a covert from the temptations of Satan—a place of repose and refreshment for travellers passing through the wilderness on their way to the heavenly rest. The stem of this blessed tree is His eternal Godhead; the principal branches are His covenant-offices and relations; the minor boughs are the ordinances and providences which

He administers. Under these believers are bid welcome to come and rest. Never do we betake ourselves to this shelter and covering, till some oppressive heat scorches us, or till enemies assail—or the tempest of trouble gathers around us. Then, like Elijah, when he lay down and slept under the juniper tree in the wilderness, we find the surest protection, and abundant nourishment and comfort. By faith, we betake ourselves to this shadow, and in fervent love and desire we repose under it. Among creatures there is no real shelter or refreshment. These “sons” are but wild, fruitless trees, as “the heath in the desert,” or as Jonah’s gourd, that “springs up in a night and perishes in a night.” “*I delighted to sit down.*” This has been the most pleasant memory of the past; it is the chief exercise of the believing heart in coming to a sacramental feast. Let it be yours now, communicants, as you draw nigh to the Well-Beloved, and delight yourselves in Him.

Moreover, *fruit*, the most excellent, is enjoyed when we sit under His shadow—“*And his fruit was sweet to my taste.*” In eastern lands, when the pomegranate or citron extend their branches for a shade, there is a circular carpet of verdure at the foot of the tree, and mellow ripe fruits loading the superincumbent branches drop down among those who recline upon it. So whenever we come to the protecting, refreshing shade of Christ—in trouble, affliction, or in holy ordinances, we enjoy at the same time His rich fruit. The two are inseparable. The believer betaking himself to the shadow of Jesus’ wings, cannot fail to partake of His precious pleasant fruit. With this design, are we conducted to scenes of affliction and sorrow—and led to the shade of the tabernacle—the covert of holy ordinances. There enjoying the benefits of Christ’s mediation, the believer glories in tribulation, and rejoices in the Rock of his salvation.

This fruit, “*sweet to the taste*” is all the provision of the New Covenant—all the blessings of the Saviour’s mediation. These too are “the fruits of the Spirit”—conveyed in divine promises, adapted to the spiritual appetite, and satisfying to the spiritual taste. They are special gifts in providence, dispensed by the enthroned Redeemer—blessing the believer’s lot, and ever working together for his good. Your encouragement, communicants! in coming to this ordinance is connected with such views of the Beloved, and of the blessed

provision He has made for your comfort and happiness. Have you already had experience of all this? Is Christ Jesus, your only and best Beloved—esteemed by you excellent above all other beloveds, whether in heaven or earth? Are you acquainted with the suitable, refreshing shade which He has provided? Have you betaken yourselves to it—and at times reposed under it with satisfaction and delight? In that posture have you received the precious fruits of Jesus' love and purchase, and found them sweet to your taste? If such, in any degree, is your experience, we bid you welcome to the feast of Jesus' love. We encourage you to seek and expect yet greater manifestations of His grace; and we cannot doubt that He who has revealed Himself to your souls, and has led you up to His table, will satisfy the desires of your heart, while you partake of the symbols of His atonement—the sealed pledges of His covenant favour.

2. (After partaking).—Dear brethren and sisters in Christ, fellow-communicants! Your present favoured position, as brought up from the wilderness, and led into the presence of the Lord and Master of the Feast, calls on you now to seek faith's view of Christ and His benefits. Behold Him in His fulness, suitableness, and matchless beauty. Appropriate Him as the Well-Beloved of your souls, incomparably above all other objects of desire and affection. This is emphatically *the feast of His love*. You enjoy it, when He sheds abroad His love in the heart, by the Spirit; when constrained by it, you surrender your hearts to Him, and reject all rivals. And, in solemn public profession, you declare—"My Beloved is mine, and I am His;" "A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved unto me: He shall lie all night between my breasts." Again, you are invited and bid welcome to "*sit down*" now, "*with delight under the shade*" of the apple-tree. You need it now, as you have found it in times past—a covering from God's wrath and avenging justice; from the temptations of Satan—from trials in the world. This shade for protection and comfort is here, as you have found it in days of affliction and conflict. Behold it in the person, perfections, and offices of the Redeemer. See it in the shadow of the Saviour's cross, interposed between you and the blazing rays of divine justice. See it brought near in holy ordinances, and in gracious providences, as a "*tabernacle from the heat*"—(Isa. iv. 6)—like the pillar of cloud, for protection and refreshment. The "*Lord is the shade*

at thy right hand." His "feathers shall hide thee, His faithfulness shall be a shield and buckler around thee." You are welcome to sit down under this Divine Shadow now, and delight in the sense of safety from God's wrath—from the law's curse—from the power of enemies—and of spiritual refreshment and joy.

As you go to meet the trials of the wilderness again, *abide under the shade of the Apple-tree*. You will find it to be extended everywhere and all-sufficient. Your grand duty is to "dwell in the secret place of the Most High," and then you "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." You may ever repair to it when tried with the fears of wrath—when pursued by enemies—when under heavy affliction—and exposed to conflict and trial. Your interest is ever to betake yourself to it for safety, and rest under it for refreshment and comfort. The Lord will be your refuge and hiding-place from all storm and tempest. In the time of trouble, He shall "hide you in His pavilion;" in "the secret of His tabernacle, He will cover you." He "shall set you upon a rock."

You have been brought now under this refreshing Shadow, that you may enjoy with delight the *precious fruits* of Jesus' mediation and love. Behold them plentiful and ever new on the tree of life. See them scattered in rich profusion among those who sit under its cooling shade—adapted to every taste, and fitted to supply every want, and satisfy every desire. You may now gather and appropriate them in all their fulness and excellency. The privileges of the covenant—all purchased blessings of God's salvation—the plentiful graces of the Holy Spirit—these are precious fruits provided for your spiritual want and refreshment. They are freely offered you in the invitations and promises of the word—they become yours by the Spirit exciting an appetite and relish for them, and satisfying it by giving the desired enjoyment. The evidence that you partake of them, lies in their being *sweet to your taste*. As you appropriate them, they are felt to be sweeter than honey dropping from the comb. Gracious promises, pardons sealed, peace of conscience, assurance of God's love, the joy of the Spirit, the hope and earnest of eternal salvation—all these are offered freely for satisfaction and joy. You have the warrant and welcome to appropriate them fully, and as you betake yourselves to the shade of the apple-tree, you will find them gladdening the heart and nourishing up to life eternal.

The privileges you have now enjoyed, *lay you under new*

obligations to all holy obedience. Here is the only way of loving service and of blissful enjoyment. Esteem Christ Jesus the Lord, all excellent and glorious ; live constantly near Him ; betake yourselves always to the shelter and covert that are found in Him. Sit with delight under the shade of His Godhead—His offices, His atoning righteousness, endeared relations, ordinances, and gracious providences. Here you will find a rich provision for your spiritual nourishment, refreshment, and joy. As you go down from the mount of communion, we commit you to the tender care and compassion of the Well Beloved. We commend you to the shade of His power and love, which you will always need, and to the rich fruits of His mediation for all comfort and blessing. But a little while, and you will no longer need Christ as a shelter from fears and enemies and trials in the wilderness. The manna for the desert will cease, and you will eat the old corn of the heavenly Canaan. You will then sit down with millions of redeemed ones, gathered from earth, under the shade of the Tree of Life, in the midst of the paradise of God. With a sense of sweetness and satisfaction beyond all that you have ever experienced here, you will eat *harvest fruits* that are new every month, and drink of rivers of pleasures, and fulness of joy, at God's right hand for evermore.

No. 2.

Isaiah xii. 2.—Behold, God is my salvation ; I will trust and not be afraid ; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; He also is become my salvation.”

Communicants ! We earnestly desire that this ordinance may be to you and to us, the audience-chamber into which the King brings His friends,—in which He feasts them with the promises of His love—makes to them manifestations of His glory—and beautifies them with His salvation. There are *four great objects* which we should set before us, if we would perform aright the sacramental service, and be accepted and blessed in it. These are the grateful remembrance of Christ—believing showing forth His death—communion realized with God, and the saints—and personal dedication. If we would derive the blessing from the ordinance, we must keep these objects distinctly

in view when we come to the feast, and we should be concerned personally to realize them in this scene of holy communion.

Called as we are to renew and seal a solemn profession, we select as a subject of devout meditation, a passage which vividly presents the whole provision of the feast—and which, through the work of the Spirit, may serve to impart assured grounds of acceptance and blessing. ‘The *time* in which this song of thanksgiving and triumph is sung is the whole day of gospel grace and privilege. On the last day of one of the ancient Jewish festivals, with water drawn in a golden pitcher from the fountain of Siloam, the sacrifices were sprinkled, and the rejoicing worshippers sang this song—“O Lord ! I will praise Thee—though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me.” The *same* song gives expression to the devout feelings of saints in all ages, when salvation-blessings are brought near and enjoyed. It was sung in substance by the thousands of Israel at the Red Sea ; it was the burden of praise in the great Hallel hymn at the ancient Passover—Psalm cxiii. to cxviii. ; it supplies the chief notes of the perpetual New Song, to be learned on earth, and sung by the redeemed in glory. These opening words are the outburst of gratitude and praise for deliverance from wrath, and for the enjoyment of Divine favour. This is the first realized blessing of God’s great salvation. We are redeemed to God by the blood of His Son. His anger is turned away for ever. This is the ground of all substantial comfort—the matter of joyful and triumphant praise.

The language is, moreover, that of *believing appropriation*. With fixed attention, in wonder and surprise, we exclaim, “*Behold, God is my salvation!*” It intimates that we have cause to say this, and a heart to believe it. Salvation is felt to be the chief matter of intense interest and desire ; Christ Jesus, as set forth in the sacrament, is not only embraced as a Saviour, but as, in the fullest sense, all our salvation. He is its glorious Author. It originated from the infinite love and sovereign grace of God, and the Surety-undertaking of the Redeemer. It was accomplished by the obedience and sufferings of the Mediator ; and it is applied in all its benefits and blessings by God the Spirit. Salvation in all its parts—begun, progressive, complete—is altogether in and from Him. This faith joyfully embraces and proclaims Christ Jesus, in whom God is seen, known, and enjoyed, is my only precious Saviour. On Him

I depend wholly for salvation—perfect and everlasting. He has been to me salvation in all the past—from guilt—from the law's curse—from the power of spiritual enemies—from the pollution of sin—and from death. He is now to me a present salvation ; and relying on His person and finished work, I have assured confidence and hope for all the future. He who “has begun a good work” in me, will certainly finish it—and His will be all the glory. He will yet bring forth the Headstone, with hosannas of “grace, grace unto it.”

This inspires *strong confidence and security*. The resolution of the heart arises from taking God as our salvation. “*I will trust and not be afraid.*” This is all our duty and privilege—to trust the Redeemer’s person as worthy of all confidence—His word of promise as faithful and true—His finished righteousness as perfect and all-sufficient. To such a Saviour, may the believer say—I entrust myself and all my interests, I will confide wholly on His wisdom, and love and truth. I will “trust in the Lord for ever,” for “in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength.” “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him, against that day.” (Isaiah xxvi. 2 ; 2 Tim. 1. 12.) Thus are we raised above fears, and enabled to rest with full security on the Rock of salvation. Some of God’s people are assailed with fears on many grounds—from sin—from enemies—from their own weakness—from future evils of various kinds apprehended. The salvation provided is a sure and all-sufficient remedy against all these fears. It includes full deliverance and victory. Taking God as our salvation, we may fully trust His grace and love—His promise and providence—and especially Christ Jesus Himself in whom all fulness dwells, and whose glory is great in our salvation. Leaning on the Beloved, we have no more ground of dread. Faith is a sovereign remedy against disquieting fears from whatever quarter they come. As Jehovah brings near and shows His salvation, He gives assurances of love, sufficient to dispel all terror, and to fill with joy and peace in believing. “Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” (Isaiah xli. 10.) Do you contemplate with wonder and delight, God become your salvation? Can you rest in Him as your reconciled God and Father? Confiding in Him with all the heart, you are encouraged to rise

above fears, and to triumph in His salvation. With such views and feelings, you are welcome to this feast of love. You are encouraged to come now, and partake of the blessed provision, that you may enjoy communion with God and saints in heaven and earth—and uniting with the redeemed in glory, may exclaim, with a loud voice, “Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb !”

2. (After partaking.) Communicants ! your chief duty and privilege at the Sacramental table is *to embrace the Saviour*, held forth in gracious offers and endearing relations, and to appropriate all His salvation. A glorious provision has been made for all your wants—a rich supply of all needed blessing. It is now brought very near you—and spread out for your present acceptance. Faith apprehends the Saviour in His Divine character, and matchless excellencies. “*Jehovah Jah is my strength and my song.*” He is God in covenant—possessed of all being in Himself—self-existent, all-sufficient, and unchangeable. His glorious name is repeated, because He is supremely excellent—and all fulness of being and blessedness that is His, is mine to save and bless me. He alone is “*my strength*”—seasonable, sufficient, and unfailing—my strength in weakness—for work, in temptation—for warfare—in life and in death. This is all in Christ—through whom we can do all things, as He strengthens us. We have the fullest warrant now to “take hold of His strength” in believing and vowed, and in all future labours and trials to confide in it. His promise is most precious—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” (Deut. xxxiii. 25 ; 2 Corinthians xxii. 9.)

Jehovah Jah is likewise our “Song,” and thus we should appropriate Him. While some of God’s saints, walking in darkness, have the Saviour for their strength, and do not sufficiently make Him their Song, we should take Him for our comfort against all grief. We are called to joy in the God of our salvation. We are again required to make the Lord our “*Praise*”—blessing Him for His excellency—imitating His character and perfections, and praising Him ever for His works of wonder done to the sons of men. He “giveth us songs in the night.” As “the ransomed of the Lord,” we should “return and come to Zion, with singing and everlasting joy upon our heads.” We come up to the Feast, to learn to

sing "the New Song," that we may be prepared to sing it with the multitude of the redeemed, in the immediate presence of the Lamb, before the throne. As we place all our trust in Jehovah our God in covenant, He is made known as our Strength; as we seek to derive all our comfort and joy from Him, and ascribe to Him all glory, He is our Song. This we should do continually—as expressive of the whole spirit and life of true religion—"I will go on in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only." "In everything give thanks." "I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in His name, saith the Lord." (Psalm lxxi. 16; 1 Thess. v. 18; Zech. x. 12.)

"*He also is become my salvation.*" This is the soul's full rest in God in Covenant. We close where we began—delighting ourselves in God, and feeling that we never can go farther. He has "*become our salvation*" in His sovereign grace and eternal love. The Son incarnate—the Crucified One—God's unspeakable Gift—in all His perfections, and precious offices and relations—is become my salvation. HE—by way of special emphasis—the First and the Last—He and none else is "*my salvation.*" What He purchased at an infinite price, He has brought near and applied. In matchless love, He has conferred His salvation on one every way unworthy—guilty, polluted, and rebellious. This must ever be to me matter of profound wonder and ecstatic praise. "*What shall I render to the Lord, for all His benefits to me?*" "*Behold! what manner of love is this, that we should be called the sons of God?*" Enjoying such high and honourable privileges, our great duty is ever to give God in *Christ all the glory.* As He alone in covenant-love, has provided, brought near and applied salvation—and as this salvation is centred in Himself, we should believe on His name—and love and hope for His salvation. Like the aged patriarch, when blessing his children, we should, lifting our thoughts and desires above all other objects, declare from the heart—we "*have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!*" (Genesis xl ix. 18.) In the fullest sense it is *His salvation*, as it flows from Him, its blessed Source—is enjoyed in union to Him, and fellowship with Him—and the glory of its possession belongs to Him for ever. Are we now waiting and hoping for it—desiring and expecting its rich blessings—and preparing for receiving the crown and completion of it? In the language

of a youthful martyr, we should exclaim—"I commit myself to Thy eternal rest—O Thou blessed three one God—to see Thee and enjoy thee for ever."

We are called henceforth to cherish habitually *this joyful frame of heart*, and to give expression to this appropriating faith *with our lips and lives*. That God has become our salvation should greatly humble us, and tend to *make us holy in all manner* of conversation. We are delivered from the power of spiritual enemies, that we may serve God in fear—"in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life." We are saved from sin, that we may walk in the beauty of holiness. We are redeemed to God, that we may ever glorify His name, and show forth the praises of Him who has called us from darkness into His marvellous light. Our constant duty is to walk worthy of the Lord "to all well-pleasing"—in devotedness of heart, and entire submission of life. For all this service, let the God of salvation alone be all your *strength* and *song*—your *hope* and *perpetual praise*. A sinner saved by grace owes to God in covenant the undivided glory of His salvation. We may ever "rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ," receiving the atonement. "The joy of the Lord is our strength;" Christ within us, is "the hope of glory." The headstone of the building of mercy, He will bring forth with shoutings of grace, grace unto it.

As you leave this scene of holy communion, go forward with the same living faith by which you came up to the feast—with the like spirit of holy dedication, exulting praise and joyful anticipation. If God has become your salvation, in a little time, you will be called to enter a scene of loftier communion and everlasting and ecstatic praise. As you take your place among the white-robed and palm-bearing company, you will join them in exclaiming, with loud voice—"Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever." The harp of glory—as it is grasped, and its chords are struck by any ransomed one, when he returns and comes to Zion, will ever triumphantly resound—"BEHOLD GOD IS MY SALVATION"—complete, glorious and eternal—"THE LORD JEHOVAH IS MY STRENGTH AND SONG: HE ALSO IS BECOME MY SALVATION."

No. 3.

Gen. xxviii. 12-22. "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven," etc.

Called up as we are this day to a scene of divine manifestation, where the gracious presence of the Redeemer is to be realized, and solemn vows in His name are to be pledged, we select for meditation a passage from patriarchal history, which is not unsuitable to our state and circumstances when assembled in the banqueting-house.

When Jacob was forced to wander from his father's house, through the hatred of his unnatural brother, at the close of his first day's journey, he came near to Bethel. Weary and oppressed in spirit, he cast himself down on the ground—the stones of the field for his pillow, and the canopy of heaven for his covering. Notwithstanding his forsaken and forlorn condition, he was still the object of peculiar divine regard and protection. There was vouchsafed to him a vision which reassured him, and filled him with courage and gladness. He dreamed, and saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, upon which the feet of bright angels were ascending and descending. On its top stood Jehovah Himself, looking down with tender compassion upon the distressed traveller, and uttering assurances of love, and words of blessing—fitted to dispel his sorrow and thrill his heart with gratitude and joy.

To Jacob, this vision was a *symbolical* representation of a *special gracious providence*, most opportune and consolatory. It showed him, that however forsaken and destitute he felt himself to be, the care of an ever wakeful providence was around him. Thus, too, have we been brought up to this mount under the leading and care of a gracious providence. If we are here surrounded with trouble, with a sense of being distressed and forsaken upon the mind, we are yet brought near to Him who is a refuge in straits, and a present help in trouble. When we approach hither, we are encompassed with an innumerable company of angels; and, above all, the Lord of angels condescends to hold converse with us and to address to us words of loving and animating hope.

The *ladder* which Jacob saw was typical of the atonement of Christ—a shadow of the grandest doctrine and highest privilege of the gospel. It revealed a way, divinely provided, of

communication between heaven and earth. This is seen in the atoning sacrifice of the Mediator. Thus heaven and earth are brought near ; and interchanges of want and supply—of petition and blessing are going forward continually. Angel-fete are constantly coming down and ascending up on this pathway of gracious communication. Attendants upon the Saviour, they are “ministering spirits” to “the heirs of salvation.” They worship the Redeemer, and view with wrapt admiration His finished work. They descend upon the ladder to report answers of prayer, and perform offices of love to the saints. They defend them from danger—mingle in their worshipping assemblies, and keep watch around their dying beds. And they descend upon it, to bear tidings from the church on earth to heaven—and to convey the disembodied spirits of saints to glory. Behold the Lord—in personal majesty—“*stood above it.*” The mediation of Christ is everything in our approach to God and intercourse with heaven. He is the only way to the Father. All blessings of grace and providence flow to us through Christ—and all our services presented to God through Him are accepted. The Mediator is exalted above all objects in heaven and earth. By faith we may now see heaven opened and the angels of God “ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” The whole representation is designed to lead us to the Mediator and to find its completion in Him. It is Christ the Lord—the Head of all principality and power—superintending every movement in providence—dispensing all the rich treasures of His grace.

He reveals Himself as *Jehovah*—a covenant God. “*I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac.*” It is the same glorious One who said to the patriarch—“I am God Almighty: walk before me, and be thou perfect”—of whom it was declared in prophecy—“I will give thee for a covenant of the people.” The fulness of all covenant-blessings is lodged in Him, and He is placed at the head, to dispense them. Words of gracious assurance, and of wondrous encouragement and consolation were spoken by the exalted Mediator. They guaranteed a covenant land for a possession—a seed numerous as the sand of the sea—wide-spread and flourishing—the centre and source of blessing to the world. Then there were added promises of divine guidance, protection, provision and blessing, accommodated to the patriarch’s

circumstances, that met all his case, and secured to him all that he could possibly desire—"Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." His gracious powerful presence would be ever with him—in all places He would keep Him—stand near to guide, uphold, and protect in untried scenes—bring him again to his native land, and his father's house, and not leave him till He had done all that He had promised. To like spiritual discoveries, and to the same blessed privileges, communicants, you are called in this ordinance to-day. Hither you have been conducted, from wandering and trials in the wilderness to the foot of the ladder which Jacob saw in vision. These symbols of the atoning death of Christ represent a divinely provided way of communication between heaven and earth. You are bid welcome to come near; and as you come weary and heavy laden, to see but a few steps between you and the throne of glory—angel-feet constantly traversing them, and the God of glory standing at the top, deeply interested in all your case—ready to receive you in mercy, and willing to bless you. Now He reveals Himself to you as a faithful covenant-keeping God, and proposes Himself as the God of your fathers, to be your portion for ever. The same gracious assurances—the like exceeding great and precious promises, He makes to you as He did to the patriarch, when he saw visions of God at Bethel. If you will accept of Jacob's God, as He is proposed to you in the gospel—then all the promises of His presence, guidance, protection and blessing are to you yea and amen in Him. They are His sealed, tried words; and you are welcome to all the privileges and blessings which they guarantee. "Hath He spoken and will He not do it? Hath He said it, and will He not bring it to pass?"

2. (After partaking.) The *feeling and frame of spirit* which Jacob expressed, when he had seen the vision of the night, is eminently becoming you, communicants! at this sacramental feast. Awaking out of his sleep, he said in surprise and wonder—"Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not; and he was afraid, and said, this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (vers. 16, 17). You should labour to have a fitting sense of God's gracious presence. The place where you assemble is holy ground, and we should put off the shoes from our feet. It is the entrance to all blessed privilege—the introduction to bliss—"the gate of heaven." Re-

verential awe and godly fear alone become such a scene. "Who can stand before this holy Lord God?" When holy angels veil their faces and cover their feet, men who are sinful dust and ashes, should fear to draw nigh. You are now come "to God, the Judge of all—to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Have you thus seen the new and living way opened into the Holiest of all? Are you conscious of this spirit of godly fear, as you draw nigh to God? While you are encouraged to come with boldness through the blood of Jesus, it greatly concerns you to remember, that "holiness becometh God's house for ever," and that even "our God is a consuming fire."

Again, the *returns* which Jacob made for benefits received are such as are required of us, as the fruit of sacramental privileges. First, he took the stone on which he had rested his head, and *anointed* it, as *a pillar of remembrance*. The erecting of the stone in the place of communion, was designed for a lasting memorial—the anointing was for consecration. It was to testify that a scene of fellowship and blessing would be had in perpetual remembrance. The exercise of holy graces would fix it indelibly on the mind. More than forty years after, when Joseph stood by his dying bed, the aged patriarch made mention of this scene, as his memory vividly recalled it (Gen. xlvi. 3). This humble monument he regarded as a pledge given, that afterwards, in more favoured circumstances, he would raise a house for God's honour and worship. So should we, in heartfelt gratitude, set up pillars of remembrance of gracious discoveries and covenant mercy. We should cherish in the heart lively impressions of divine favour; in songs of praise we should celebrate special instances of the Lord's loving kindness; and by some definite actions, we should raise up; to transmit to future times, visible and lasting monuments of the love and faithfulness of our covenant God. "I will make Thy name to be remembered to all generations; therefore shall the people praise Thee for ever and ever."

Again, Jacob renewed his personal covenant by an *explicit vow*. He took hold of God's covenant-offer; and on the footing of it, consenting to all its proposals, he surrendered himself wholly to God. The *matter* of the vow was based on the revelation which Jehovah made of Himself, and on what he had promised to God. It was not a "*bargain transaction*"—but a free hearty acquiescence and surrender. "Since" God

is my father's God, and will be with me, He alone shall be my God and Portion—my All in all for ever and ever. I rely upon Him for gracious keeping and guidance in the way that I go. When called to be in places yet unknown, and to pass through scenes yet untried, I depend on His promised presence. I resolve to follow where He leads, and willingly to go into no place or company where I may not expect His gracious presence. Content with bread to eat and raiment to put on, I desire no large portion of earthly things. This and more He has given me already; and He has laid me therefore under greater obligations to avow the Lord to be my God. He has provided for me spiritual food, and given me the best robe of His love and righteousness. Whatever He may order respecting an earthly home, endeared by the presence of loved friends, He has promised to bring me to the Father's house of the church here, and to the many-mansioned house hereafter. By all these weighty considerations—indebted to Him for unnumbered mercies in the past, and depending on Him for the fulfilment of all His gracious promises, I yield myself in soul and body to Him—to love and serve Him continually, as I take Him to be my God and portion for ever.

In His grace and strength I engage that this stone shall be *God's house*. This scene of hallowed intercourse and communion shall be ever gratefully remembered. Bethel will be always dear to me. I will go up and build an altar and dwell there. I shall return to it after wanderings. If I ever forget Bethel, I shall account it an aggravated sin.

Finally. Jacob's vow makes mention of the dedication of worldly substance to God. "*Of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.*" This is a definite proportion—claimed by divine institution, and Jacob bound himself, by express promise, to render it without reserve. This too should be a part of our solemn engagement at the sacramental table. If we yield ourselves to the Lord, we surrender, at the same time, our effects, influence, and all that we have to His service, to advance His glory. Our worldly substance is the Lord's; and to withhold from Him what of it He claims for His people and cause, shows that we are destitute of love to Him, and that our service is hypocrisy. The enlargement of the church—the prosperity of Christian missions—the triumph of the cause of truth—and the universal establishment of Christ's kingdom in the earth require the consecration of

worldly property for these objects. Our sacramental vow is imperfect without such a specific engagement. It should expressly contain this surrender to Him of His own which He has entrusted to us for the advancement of His glory. Our giving should always be, according to the divine ordinance, a definite proportion—cheerful, systematic and liberal. From this hallowed scene—the house of God, and the gate of heaven—let us go away with vivid remembrance of blessed privileges ever retained in the mind. Let us rest on the promise of divine presence, guidance and support; and aiming in life and death to pay our vows to the Lord, let us render praise to His name.

No. 4.

Genesis xlvi. 3, 4.—“And He said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down to Egypt: for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee unto Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.”

Communicants! while we joy to meet with you on the mount of communion, we would seek that you may realize the presence and behold the glory of the King; and that you may obtain from Himself sealed assurances of gracious guidance, support and blessing for all the future. In the history of the Israelitish fathers, there are found what have been significantly termed “*Patriarchal Shadows*” of the Saviour to come, and of salvation-blessings, which He confers upon His people. From the strange eventful scenes in the history of the patriarch Jacob, we select one comprehensive record, as furnishing a suitable subject for meditation at the Lord’s table. After years of lengthened trial, tidings had been brought to the aged saint that his favourite son Joseph was yet alive, and was “governor over all the land of Egypt.” The unexpected joyful message overpowered his mind, and he fainted when he heard the news. The sight of the “waggons” sent by Joseph to carry him down to Egypt, served to reanimate him, and “his spirit revived.” In an outburst of delighted emotion, he exclaimed —“It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die.” This was the language of devout thanksgiving, full resignation and joyful hope. That the loved sor-

for whom he had so long mourned was still living—that he would yet see and embrace him, filled him with wonder, and satisfied the largest aspirations of his heart. This he regarded as “enough”—to fulfil his most eager desires, and accomplish every wish on earth. In again seeing his lost son, all the happiness which this world could give would be complete—everything desirable in life would be fully enjoyed—and he would then welcome death with resignation and joy.

Notwithstanding, when Jacob betook himself to preparation for his journey to Egypt, he had various fears and misgivings. It was a long and trying journey for one in advanced age. He might dread that his family would be seduced by Egyptian idolatry to forget God and the covenanted inheritance. He doubtless remembered the prediction of the hard bondage and long affliction of his seed in Egypt; and he shrank at the thought of himself dying, and his dust lying with idolaters. It was in this condition that he heard a message of peace, and that words of gracious encouragement were spoken to him—fitted to dispel his fears, and to fill him with confidence and joyful hope. The like assurances are addressed to all who have come in faith to the sacramental feast—to meet their misgivings and relieve their fears, and to assure them of deliverance and blessing in all future conflicts and trials.

In preparing for the descent into Egypt, Jacob, with his household came, in the first stages of his journey, to Beersheba, and rested there for the night. It was doubtless of purpose that he came thither. The place was significantly named “the well of the oath or covenant.” It had been a scene of prayer and covenanting—a place of communion with God to his father and grandfather. It was the hallowed spot, where in early life, he had received lessons of piety, and had known the pleasures of religion. There, in his way to a strange land, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac—seeking pardon for past sins, dedicating himself anew to God, and committing himself to divine guidance and protection. In the same way, and in a like spirit, we trust you have come up to this feast of communion. This should be to us Beersheba—a scene of personal covenanting—a place of prayer and of holy dedication, where we present offerings of thanksgiving—where, realizing the divine presence, we seek counsel from God—and above all—coming to the great Sacrifice we will yield ourselves to the Lord anew, in a per-

petual covenant, and obtain in answer to prayer, manifold blessing

The patriarch, thus seeking, was favoured with a divine manifestation, and had the promise of the richest blessings. In visions of the night, God appeared and spoke to him. He calls him by his name of honour—thus reminding him of Penuel, where he wrestled with the angel and prevailed. He renews with him the covenant of friendship. He proclaims His name, and reveals Himself as standing in all covenant relations—“I am God—the Mighty One of Jacob—the God of thy father.” I will be thine too. As I was with thy father, so will I be with thee—sustaining the same gracious relation, and bestowing the like rich reward. Thus, the Lord still makes himself known in the place of prayer—in a scene of covenant dedication. He is here, as the God of our fathers, and as our own God and portion. We should now take hold of the covenant, and accept of God as ours in all blessed relations—as our rest and portion for ever. We should seek to be a party in the covenant of friendship; and resting on the promise, and coming to the blood of the covenant, as a seal, we should yield ourselves to the Lord to be His wholly and for ever. To you He now speaks in words of gracious assurance as at Beersheba—“I am God, the God of thy father”—that you may accept of Him by faith, and rejoice in Him for ever. Your reception of the sacramental symbols is the testimony that you take hold of the covenant—and that, while He avouches Himself to be your God and portion, you, at the same time, avouch Him to be your God—professing that you will walk in His ways, to keep His statutes and commandments, and judgments, and to hearken to His voice.

2. (After partaking). Enjoying these high privileges, you should desire to linger in a scene so solemn and affecting. You should delight yourself in your covenant God. You are brought hither to realize His gracious presence. This is the appointed place of meeting with the Beloved—the audience-chamber where prayer is wont to be heard and graciously answered. Like Jacob, you should wrestle with the Angel, refusing to let Him go, till He bless you—till you obtain from Him assurances of deliverance and support for all the future. God’s *gracious presence* is the grand promise in view of wandering and conflict and trial. “Fear not to go down into Egypt—for I will go down with you.”

This is enough to dissipate all fears—to meet every danger, and to overcome all difficulties. It is the promise often renewed to Moses—and spoken to all the children of God—“I will certainly go with thee”—“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” On this assurance, we may rely for Divine guidance in all the way—for protection from all enemies and evils, and for a blessed issue at last. How large and condescending is the promise—“*I will go down with thee into Egypt*—and I will also surely bring thee up again!” To Jacob this was fulfilled in the mercies of the last years of his pilgrimage in Egypt, and in his body brought up for sepulture in the land of Cannan. It was yet more fully accomplished when Jacob’s posterity came up from the house of bondage—in their glorious marching, when weak in their tribes there was none. In the promised presence of Christ, the Angel of God’s face, we have a still larger and more blessed assurance. He will be with his servants, when they go down to the Egypt of the world, to scenes of affliction and trial, to death and the grave. He will go before and accompany them all the way. His presence will secure them protection and safety, in scenes of suffering and sorrow. From these, He will surely bring them up again, uninjured and blessed. He guarantees to them *enlargement* as He did to Jacob at Beersheba. “*I will there make of thee a great nation.*” The church is destined to increase under its bitterest bondage and greatest oppression. Afflictions refine and strengthen the believer’s graces—and as they emerge out of them, their greatness and power are increased, and they are comforted on every side. “The handful of corn on the mountain tops shall shake like Lebanon,” in the mellow fruit of a plentiful harvest. “They that come of Jacob shall bud and blossom and fill the face of the earth with fruit.”

The last assurance given in the night scene at Beersheba, was full of the sweetest comfort and joy to Jacob. “*Joseph shall put his hand on thine eyes.*” Long had the patriarch mourned for his son, devoured as he thought by some evil beast, and irrecoverably lost. This gladsome message assured him that Joseph would be the stay of his declining years, and would perform the tenderest offices to him in death. He would be near him in life’s last scene, and with tender hands would close his eyes in death. Jacob may have desired this as an incident which would render his departure peculiarly comfortable and

happy. Thus would his dearest wishes be gratified, and all the circumstances of his death would be peaceful and blessed.

To you, communicants ! who have been accepted guests at the Lord's table—who have again taken hold of the covenant, and who have obtained in this place the assurance of gracious leading, support, and deliverance, for all that remains of life's pilgrimage, we tender the promise of greater honour and blessing than was offered to Jacob for his dying scene. Christ Jesus—Jacob's Mighty One, who has led and fed you throughout life, will be present with you in death. His unfailing promise is that “at eventide there shall be light.” “I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” (Zech. xiv. 6 ; John xiv. 3.) He will lay His powerful loving hands upon your eyes, as light is fading from the mortal vision, and they are closing to all earthly things—and He will unfold to you visions of glory. The death of His saints, occur it when and how it may, is precious in His sight. Like as He did to the loved disciple, when overcome with the vision of His glory, he fell at His feet as one dead, He speaks to the believer's heart in death—“Fear not, I am the First and the Last. I am He that liveth and was dead ; and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death.” The hour of dissolution is the appointed time for realizing the answer of the Saviour's great priestly petition—“Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold My glory.” Now, endeared Brethren, as we part from this scene of holy communion, we affectionately bid you farewell. You and we most probably will never meet again on a like occasion on earth. We are going down to Egypt to encounter the world's afflictions and trials—as we are advancing forward to the death-scene, to the grave and to eternity. We commit you to our fathers' God—our own God in covenant, He who spoke those gracious words to Jacob, made them fully out to him and his seed. He is still the living and unchangeable One—faithful to all his promises—Jesus, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. As we bespeak your prayers for us, earnestly would we plead that yours may be the inheritance of a covenant God, and of all spiritual blessings in Christ—that His gracious presence may be ever with you in life and in death—and that you may come at length to the blissful vision of His glory for ever.

No. 5.

Job xix. 25.—“For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold Him, and not another.”

Communicants! When we are privileged to surround the table of the King, we are reminded of affecting changes in the church, and in the circle of endeared friends. Impressively are we told by the voice of providence, as well as by the warnings of the word, that this is the wilderness, and not our rest, and that “here we have no continuing city.” Some endeared ones we miss here, with whom we met on former occasions, and their seats at the sacramental table will be no longer filled by them on earth. Notwithstanding, we should rejoice that, amid these affecting changes and the sorrows of time, the source of the believer’s supports and comforts never changes and never dies. He is “Jesus, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”

The profession of Job, the man of Uz—made in a season of sad and complicated trials, some thirty-five centuries ago, may be taken as not unsuitable to the circumstances in which we assemble at this holy ordinance, and as expressive of the views and feelings which we should cherish, when we are called to the enjoyment of a high and honourable privilege. Under a special impulse of the Holy Spirit, the patriarch was raised above himself; forgetting his sorrows, and emerging out of darkness and distress, he gave strong utterance to the joyful confidence of assured faith and hope—“For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand in the latter day on the earth . . . in my flesh I shall see God: whom I shall see for myself and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.” This emphatic declaration was uttered, when outward evils of the most afflictive character assailed the holy man, and accumulated sorrows overwhelmed his spirit. His worldly property and all his children were taken from him in one day; the hand of loathsome disease wasted his body; the fierce onsets of the Tempter perplexed and agitated his spirit; the heavens above were dark and frowning; God hid His face

from him ; earthly friends stood aloof from his sore ; and his nearest kindred added cruel reproaches to his bitter grief, and proved miserable comforters. How bright and consoling to the afflicted saint was this gracious revelation ! How quieting and reassuring was his profession of faith in a personal Saviour ! With light from heaven beaming upon his heart, the storm and tempest of his spirit were scattered ; and never after do we find him entertaining such dark views of providence as he had hitherto cherished, in giving utterance to the like feeble and unbelieving complaints concerning the divine dealings.

The words of this memorable profession are recorded by the Spirit of inspiration for us, and we have the warrant and welcome to appropriate them as our own. Many of God's saints have already spoken from the heart these words, when called to pass through scenes of trial and painful bereavement, or when brought to holy ordinances ; and not a few who are now in glory, at the hour of death, have expressed their full confidence and hope in a living and life-giving Redeemer.

Communicants ! in adopting as yours the language of this solemn profession, you embrace the *person* of the mighty Redeemer, and rejoice in 'His office and work. Amidst change and decay in the world, the deaths of beloved friends, and prospects of your own dissolution, He stands forth as the living and unchangeable One, in a relation the most interesting and tender to His people. He is their Redeemer—their near Kinsman—their Goel-Avenger and Vindicator. To Him pertains the sole right of redemption, and none other in heaven or earth may intermeddle in this momentous affair. He is our Elder Brother—one in nature with those whom He came to redeem ; in covenant stipulation, He became their Surety : He undertook to discharge all their debt, and to effect for them complete redemption. He became incarnate that He might suffer and die in their stead. His humiliation in assuming human nature, and in His obedience unto death, will ever be the unspeakable wonder of men and angels. Consider this in relation to those whom He undertook to redeem—the lost and perishing—enemies, rebels—the bond-slaves of sin—hell's captives, that you may see the glory of this matchless Redeemer, and the unparalleled greatness of His love.

Then His *work*, in procuring eternal redemption for such, is fitted to excite your profoundest wonder, and to stimulate your highest praise. It was planned in infinite wisdom and

love from eternity. It was foretold in prophecy, and shadowed forth in many ancient types. In the fulness of time, the Saviour appeared as the glorious Substance, and effected for His people all that former types dimly foreshadowed, and much more that was transcendently glorious and lasting. His redemptive work, in virtue of covenant-agreement, took effect before He came into the world. Believers in the Messiah promised were justified, sanctified, and admitted to glory. The harps of prophecy were attuned to the praises of the coming Saviour, and inspired seers spoke in enraptured strains of His sufferings and consequent glory.

The different *parts* of His work of redemption are specially worthy of devout contemplation in the immediate view of their symbolical representation. For those who had forfeited all title to eternal life, He bought back the lost inheritance, with the precious price of His own blood. The costly life of the Redeemer was given as the ransom of the redeemed. He delivers from the guilt and bondage of sin by a purchase and payment of infinite value, and from the captivity of Satan and death, by a work of almighty power. He espouses our widowed nature in becoming partaker of our flesh and blood; and in the day of converting grace, by taking His redeemed into a conjugal relation to himself. And He *avenges the blood* of His saints, by requiting to their enemies, of whatever kind, all the injuries they have done to their person in mind or body, or reputation, or cause or life. How surpassingly excellent and wonderful is every part of the work of the living Redeemer! How great is the obligation of the redeemed to perpetual gratitude and praise, on account of it! The burden of the New Song will for ever be, “Thou art worthy to open the book and loose the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.”

But the emphasis of this profession lies in the declaration “*My Redeemer*,” and “*I know*” that He is so. The language of true saving faith is ever appropriating; it is expressive of a conscious sense of personal interest and joyful complacency and triumph. However imperfect then our attainments—however others may charge them with ignorance or folly, they have the best knowledge who can say—“*I know that Christ is my Redeemer*,” and that He lives, and pleads, and reigns for me.

Consider how you may, without presumption and vain

confidence, employ this emphatic language of appropriation—He is your own Redeemer.—1. When you have been led, sinful, guilty, and exposed to numerous spiritual enemies, to be *sensible of your great need* of such a Redeemer. This you have at times felt in your inmost spirit. Often have you given expression to it in prayer—“Redeem me from my foes. Deliver me from wrath. Save my soul from trouble.” Yours has been a deep and abiding feeling of your need of redemption through Christ. 2. You have *believed* with the heart in this mighty Redeemer, and appropriated His redemption as complete and all-suitable for you. The expression of a living faith is, “My Lord, and my God.” “This is my Beloved and Friend.” “*We have* redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” The whole of a true profession centres here. Well-pleased with the Redeemer and His work, we accept of Him as He is graciously offered, and rest on His finished work, for all blessing and salvation. “Let God’s redeemed say so, whom He freed from the enemies’ hand.”

Again, through the *witness of the Spirit*, we are enabled, in the fullest manner, to make this profession. He works with power on the heart, and shines upon His own work on the soul, enabling us to discern in ourselves the marks of them that are redeemed from the curse—from sin—from the world, and from all enemies—of them that are redeemed to God to be His peculiar treasure, and His inheritance for ever. He witnesses with their spirits that they are the children of God, and so “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” He is made known as to them *the living and life-giving One*. Their ransomed life is from and in Him, and all the comforts and privileges which they now enjoy, or which they have in future prospect, are lodged in Him, and flow inexhaustibly from Him.

Trusting that in this spirit you have already made this solemn profession, and that you are now prepared to renew it, by again embracing Christ Jesus as your living Redeemer, we present to you the symbols of His broken body and shed blood, encouraging you to repose all the confidence of the heart upon the person of the God-near Kinsman, and to rest upon His perfect finished redemption.

2. (After partaking). Communicants! When enjoying the feast prepared in the mountain of the Lord’s house, your chief duty and privilege are, 1.) to *accept of the living Redeemer* as

yours, and to surrender your life and all that is yours to Him wholly and for ever. Like Job, when the powerful impulse of the Spirit moved him, you should rise now above the trials and sorrows of the world, and look alone to Him who loved and chose you from all eternity, and who died to redeem you from all evil, and to be to Him a peculiar treasure. Purchased by the price of His blood, you owe Him all, and willingly should you accept Him as your life—your hope—your portion for ever. What more natural than to surrender the life which He rescued from death to this precious Redeemer! What service more reasonable than to yield yourselves to God as alive from the dead, and your bodies as instruments of righteousness unto holiness!

2.) The firm basis of all your trust is that the Redeemer is now *living and acting for you*. This holy solemnity is the evidence that Jesus is yet alive, enthroned in glory, conducting the government of the universe, dispensing all blessings to His ransomed people. It presents to all such as appropriate the benefits of redemption life in a risen Saviour. “If when we were enemies we were reconciled by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Exalted to glory, He lives to plead and reign for you. He is a Priest upon His throne—a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec.” With a Brother’s nature and a Brother’s heart, He knows and feels for His people in their diversified cases, and wants, and temptations. He ever lives to make intercession. With active and constant sympathy, the great High Priest has a fellow-feeling for their infirmities, for “in all points He was tried as they are, yet without sin.” Their prayers, and sighs, and groans, He collects in His censer, and intermingling them with fragrant incense, He renders them accepted with God, and He sends down in answer to them showers of blessing. He is thus “able” and ready “to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.” He lives, too, as “a Prince and a Saviour,” to confer the blessings He has purchased, and for the bestowal of which He ever pleads. Administering the covenant of peace, He is the executor of His own testament, communicating to His ransomed ones all its rich legacies. He must reign, till He has put down all their enemies. He is Head over all things for the benefit of His church. Every act of His royal dominion—all the dispensations from His throne of providence and grace, display

His life in glory as being incessantly employed to promote His people's safety, and comfort, and final salvation. This is their present peace, and future blessed hope. Their "life is hid with Christ in God." When "He who is their life shall appear, they shall also appear with Him in glory." This exalted Redeemer lives, moreover, as the *Basis* of all His people's happiness. He is their loving, unchangeable Friend—their Husband, Head, and Lord. He is to them a well of living water—the deep, unfathomable, inexhaustible Fountain of all their peace and joy—of their present light and comfort—of their endless and unbounded felicity. Should we not delight ourselves in Him, and embracing Him with the enraptured affections of the heart, exclaim—"Whom have I in the heavens but Thee? and there is none on the earth whom I desire beside Thee?"

3.) Again, the Redeemer you trust will *outlive all your enemies*, and will fill the place of *friends and comforts* that have been taken away. In a changeful, dying world, He remains ever the same—the living, life-giving Saviour. In scenes of sadness and bereavement, He proclaims in words of strong consolation, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me shall never die; and he that liveth and believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." When one friend after another has been removed by death, He still lives—the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. He draws near to the forsaken, and desolate, filling mourners with divine consolation, and enabling them to rejoice in tribulation. Here is the sure source of our triumph in conflict—of our joy in affliction and death—"The Lord liveth; blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted."

4.) The profession which you have thus made points beyond present scenes, to the *day of the Saviour's future glorious appearance*. If we know Him as our living Redeemer, we are assured that He shall "stand the latter day upon the earth," and that our "eyes shall behold Him for ourselves and not another." We shall "see God"—the glorified Redeemer appearing in human nature—visible to our bodily eyes, and revealed in His divine dignity by faith in its highest exercise. This is the beatific vision—the joyful hope of the saints. As they rise from their sleep in the grave, the first glorious object that shall meet their enraptured gaze, will be the living Redeemer, whom they loved on earth, drawing near, in the great

ness of His love and condescension, to welcome and embrace them. He shall stand at last upon the earth—Himself the Last—the Omega of all their faith, and hope, and joy, as He was the Alpha. He will come, according to His promise, to receive them to Himself, that they may be with Him where He is for ever to behold His glory. The vision of the Redeemer that will then be enjoyed will be familiar, appropriating, soul-satisfying, and transforming. “Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold Him, and not another.” Not as “a stranger,” but as a Friend and Brother, will He be beheld. Amidst the splendours of His glory, there will be nothing to prevent the nearest approach of the redeemed to the Saviour—there will be everything to fill them with complacency and delight. They shall see Him as in the fullest sense their own—as to them “All in all.” He shall “see the travail of His soul and be satisfied.” And when they awake, they “shall be satisfied with His likeness, and shall see His face in righteousness.” The glory of the Redeemer at His second coming shall be shed in dazzling brightness upon His saints that are gathered around Him, and, being transformed into His image, it will be reflected from them in most attractive lustre. “When He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” He will “come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.” The vision of faith which was at best imperfect and transient, as “through a glass darkly,” will then be succeeded by that which is face to face—without a medium—cloudless, uninterrupted, and eternal. The glorious Object, the living Redeemer, will be continually in view; and His ransomed ones, completely assimilated to Him, will go no more out from His immediate presence. The Sun of Righteousness, illuminating all heaven with His glory, will be their “everlasting light.” “There shall be no night there; His servants shall see His face, and His names shall be on their foreheads.”

If such, communicants, are the blessed hopes which you are now warranted to cherish, in the exercise of faith in the Redeemer, as yours, and as living, pleading for you, should you not henceforth treat Him with unwavering confidence; rejoice in Him in all your afflictions and sorrows; and constrained by His love, live not to yourselves, but to Him who died in your stead to redeem you from the curse, and to bring you to God? Should you not live alone to Him who has

ascended to glory to prepare a place for you ; that you may come at length to share His blessedness for ever ? He only has the paramount and sole claim to yourselves and all that is yours. He is all your life—your hope, and joy, and blessedness, in time and throughout eternal ages. Your renewed vows this day, registered in heaven, pledge you to surrender to Him your hearts, to love Him supremely—to be ever jealous of His interest, and to live devoted to His service.

We commit you wholly to Him, and to the word of His grace. In all duties to which He will call you, trust in Him for support and acceptance as your living Redeemer : in weakness and sorrow, rest in Him as your strength, and joy, and blessed hope. He will guide you safely to the last—subdue all your enemies ; and at death, as the trials and conflicts of earth come to an end, you will be enabled joyfully to resign your life to Him who was revealed as your own matchless Redeemer—to depart and be with Him, seeing and enjoying Him fully and for evermore. As the last pang of parting nature is felt, and the disembodied spirit stands in the immediate presence of the Saviour, you will exclaim with rapturous surprise and delight, “ Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him and He will save us ; this is the Lord, we have waited for Him ; we will be glad, and rejoice in His salvation.”

No. 6.

Song iii. 9, 10.—“ King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, and the midst thereof being paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem.”

Communicants ! The holy ordinance to which you are this day invited, has an intimate relation to the compact of mercy and love between the persons of the Godhead from all eternity—the covenant of human redemption. It was instituted to exhibit its gracious and wonderful provisions—to bring near its rich blessings, and as a divinely ordained seal, to confirm and ratify their possession to the heirs of salvation. When we come to Mount Zion, we are come to the Mediator of the new covenant. The robe of acceptance—the wedding garment, is the righteousness of the covenant ; the feast of

faith is its precious promises ; and among the chief of its significant symbols is the cup of the New Testament, the blood of the Suriety, "shed for many for the remission of sins." Our great concern in approaching to the ordinance, is to "take hold of the covenant," and rest on its gracious arrangements, while we yield ourselves to God, and hope to be made "joyful in His house of prayer," and to have our "offering accepted on His altar."

As a theme of suitable meditation, and to minister the food of faith, we direct your attention to the lively and lofty passage contained in Song iii. 9, 10—"King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon . . . the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom . . . of gold, the covering . . . of purple, th: midst . . . paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem." Whatever other views have been taken of these beautifully figurative expressions, they are singularly applicable to the covenant of Jehovah's peace, and are fitted to engage our profoundest thoughts, and most ardent desires and affections, when the rich stores of the covenant are spread out before us. Everything here is deserving of fixed absorbing attention, and of being embraced and appropriated by a lively faith. The central object in the representation is "King Solomon." His name occupies a place of special emphasis. The Master of this feast is Jesus the Son of God—the Mediator and Surety of the covenant. One transcendantly "greater than Solomon is here." His name is *Jedidiah*—the Beloved of the Lord. He is Solomon, the Prince of peace, who builds the temple of the Lord, and will for ever bear the glory. In wisdom and power, in riches, and the extent and perpetuity of His dominion, He is "higher than the kings of the earth." He is Head of all principality and power, and none besides in heaven and earth is worthy to be compared to Him. As we behold His glory, and listen to His words of unsearchable wisdom, and see "the meat of His table and the sitting of His servants," and gaze upon His wondrous works and the diversified excellencies of His character, should we not feel as the Queen of Sheba, when "there was no more spirit in her," and exclaim, as she did—"It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom ; but, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom, for thou exceedest the fame that I heard?"

The pre-eminent excellency of King Solomon is principally

displayed in *the work* in which he has been engaged. This exhibits illustriously his own glory, and the benefit and blessing of his people. He made this chariot "for himself," to manifest His glory, above all His other works. It was at the same time "*for the daughters of Jerusalem*"—the weak, the defiled, and helpless, to bear them up—carry them through labours and difficulties in safety—and to confer upon them the highest honour. His glory and their benefit are inseparably connected. What he makes for himself, he has at the same time contrived for his people's good. The one chariot is for him and them. His greatest work is undertaken for their benefit and blessing. Exalted and glorious as He is, He condescends to take His people into the nearest fellowship with Himself, and to be with them in the conveyance provided to carry them from earth to heavenly glory.

This chariot is a fit emblematical representation of *the covenant of grace*—the divine plan of infinite wisdom and love for the salvation of lost sinners. This wondrous contrivance—the result of the combined counsels of the blessed Trinity, was eminently the work of the Second Person of the Godhead, the eternal Mediator. He stands First on the elect's part, in the design of mercy. From all eternity, "He engaged His heart to draw near the Father, and His delights were with the sons of men." He willingly became Surety for lost sinners, and was set up from everlasting, as the Mediator and Head of the redeemed. The "counsel of peace" was framed to make the brightest display of the love, wisdom, and grace of the Surety; and to secure the highest good of those who were chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world. Given to be "*a covenant of the people*," He was peculiarly qualified to engage in the high undertaking, and to carry it out into complete accomplishment. His was love sovereign, gratuitous, and passing knowledge. His wisdom was infinite and multiplex, in the variety and harmony of its aspects and operations—His grace almighty, and never-failing. Supreme in power, and unchangeable in truth, He overlooks nothing in the vast contrivance that can conduce to His people's safety and comfort, and He is able to do all that is required to secure their happiness in time and eternity. The covenant was framed especially for the glory of the Saviour's grace. While it exhibits "*the manifold wisdom of God*," and "*the exceeding riches of His grace*," there is nothing wanting in it, that will promote the

safety and felicity of the redeemed. All Divine perfections are herein harmonized and glorified. By “two immutable things”—the word and oath of the Eternal, there is strong and everlasting consolation to all who flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them.

The *different parts* of this wondrous structure, show its excellency, and the *security* of those who take hold of the covenant, and rest upon its ample provision. The chariot which King Solomon made for himself and for the benefit of his redeemed, was made of “*the wood of Lebanon*”—fragrant, durable, incorruptible—that which was used in building the temple. So the covenant of grace is everlasting, and all its properties are excellent and durable. Its “*pillars of silver*” are “*exceeding great and precious promises*,” which indicate its order and beauty—its stateliness and stability. It is “*ordered in all things and sure*.” Like the two pillars which stood at the entrance of the ancient temple—these silver pillars are *stability* and *strength* to the structure of mercy. As the weak lay hold on them, they are raised up and upheld. When discouraged and ready to faint, as we grasp them, we renew our strength, mount up in lofty flight, and run without wearying or fainting. These costly pillars can never shrink or be shaken. As we cling to them, we may claim as ours all promised blessings, and know that divine faithfulness—firm and unchangeable as the pillars of the universe, is engaged for their fulfilment. The “*bottom of fine gold*”—solid and most precious—is the *person* of the God-man Mediator, and His divine perfections and purposes—sufficient to bear the whole superstructure of mercy, and to be the firm foundation of confidence and hope to all who rest upon it. The “*purple covering*”—to screen from the storm of wrath, is *the blood and righteousness* of the covenant. This is an effectual shelter from the avenging justice of God, and from all tempests from hell and earth. Under the covert of the Mediatorial righteousness, there is no possible condemnation. By the application of the blood of the covenant, we are safely protected from all enemies and from dangers of every kind. The destroying angel cannot come near us. Resting under this glorious covert, we are kept from the power of evil, and may ever repose in perfect peace and security. As we meditate on this wonderful contrivance, the different parts appear more and more valuable and excellent. The wood of Lebanon is

succeeded by costly silver—and this by the most fine gold; and transcending all material riches, is the last and most glorious part of the covenant provision—“*The midst thereof was paved or lined with love for the daughters of Jerusalem.*” The “midst” is the inward part or heart of it, and this pavement is all around it, and pervades it wholly. This is the love, sovereign, eternal and unchangeable of Jehovah—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the covenant. It is for “the daughters of Jerusalem”—sinful, weak, helpless creatures—displaying amazing condescension, in stooping down to objects so unworthy. As the lining of the chariot, it is always nearest to them; and adapted in all circumstances to their case and condition, whether they walk, or sit, or lie down, burdened and overcome. Throughout trials and afflictions, those who are in the covenant may ever rest on the warm, tender love of a covenant God; and in suffering and death, this love is all-embracing and sustaining. Here shines forth in brightest lustre the rich grace of the covenant. He who is within it, however tried, has affliction unstinged. He cannot fall—for if he does it is upon love, to lift him up and restore him again. He cannot be rejected or cast out, for love unchanging and abiding to the end, covers all his infirmities, and God, in showing it, “will not contend for ever, nor will He be always wroth.” This lining of love renders the chariot of King Solomon, a vehicle most suitable to convey believers to heavenly glory through all the ills of time. Jehovah ever rests in His love towards them. That which was from eternity lasts throughout all time. All the dispensations of the covenant begin and end in love. As the believer is taken into it, and made to experience near to Him at every stage of his pilgrimage, the great love of the covenant, may he not joyfully exclaim—“*He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and this is all my salvation, and all my desire?*”

Now, communicants! this exalted King is presented to you in this ordinance, and this full and rich provision is set before you. He is here in the invitations and offers of His word, and in the fulness and power of His grace. He presides at His own table, and “is held in the galleries.” Have you seen Him arrayed in stately and comely majesty? Do you desire now to behold “the King in His beauty”—manifesting His wisdom, love, and matchless condescension, in contriving and executing the wondrous plan of human redemp-

tion? What think you of the covenant of grace—"the chariot of the wood of Lebanon," which this glorious King hath made for Himself and for the benefit of all His saved ones? As you come to the lively symbols of its rich provision—and enjoy the seal of the covenant, take hold of it by faith, and rest upon it with assured confidence. We cordially welcome you to the feast. We encourage you to go in to the King. Accepting the Mediator and Surety, and coming to the blood of the covenant, all its privileges are yours. God has become your salvation, and you are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." "All is yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

2. (After partaking).—While, Communicants, you are seated with the King at His table, you are specially called to behold and admire Him. The children of Zion have the highest reason to be "joyful in their King." His are all wisdom and power. His grace and love are sovereign and unsearchable. His kindness and condescension are unspeakable, and most tender. He is girt with faithfulness, and arrayed in majesty. He is ever the same, eternal and unchangeable. His glory is eminently displayed in the covenant of redemption. His wisdom in contriving the wondrous plan. His love in becoming Surety—and the glory of all His perfections in fulfilling its high stipulations, and in applying its purchased benefits. Here, above all other manifestations, you can see "the King in His beauty"—His majesty and condescension closely united; having on His head many crowns, and possessed of all power in heaven and earth, yet regarding the humble, and holding fellowship with the poor and needy. You are invited now to receive Him as a Prince and Saviour—to touch His golden sceptre of grace, and to submit to His royal dominion. Casting your crowns at His feet, you should tender to Him loving regard and leal heartfelt obedience. "The Lord is our defence, and the Holy One of Israel is our King." "God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth." (Psalm lxxxix. 18; lxxiv. 12.)

2. You are called to *admire the covenant provision, and now to take hold of it.* for all blessing and salvation. This chariot, made by King Solomon, was framed for your highest good for time and for eternity. It was contrived for the benefit of sinful, needy, and helpless ones. As you apprehend the covenant of peace, made before the foundation of the world, and consider

the Mediator's undertaking for His chosen people, you will be constrained the more to admire and love Him, and to praise Him for so excellent and costly a provision. This is the masterpiece of divine wisdom and love—the treasury of all grace—the rich, inexhaustible Fountain of all blessing. The covenant has for its matter all fulness—all wisdom for its manner—it is most condescending in its terms, and in its ends most gracious and glorious. For all the wants of the elect, it makes suitable and ample provision; and while it exalts them to honour, it secures, without failure, their complete salvation and endless felicity. King Solomon has spared no cost in providing a way by which His people may have the nearest and most honourable fellowship with Himself, and be conveyed in safety through all trials and dangers to heavenly glory. You are welcome now to betake yourselves for shelter and safety to the *purple covering*—the blood and righteousness of the Covenant. Here, as in a Hiding Place, you will be protected from the storm of God's wrath, and sheltered from all tempests from hell and earth. The Mediator has brought in for you an “everlasting righteousness;” and laying hold of it, you have the warrant to say—“*In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.*”

The “*silver pillars*”—strong and glorious—are “the exceeding great and precious promises” of the covenant. They are absolute and unconditional—all “yea and amen in Christ Jesus.” You have all encouragement to appropriate and rest on them. They are the expressions of God's gracious purposes—the conveyance-deeds of all the legacies of the New Testament—the safe anchor-ground of all blessed hope. Lay hold for yourselves of some one of these promises, and yours will assuredly be all blessing. The whole provision of life and salvation lies here, for the covenant is a cluster of precious promises. He who spoke in vision to his Holy One, is able and willing to fulfil all that He has promised. See that your name is inscribed with His in the promise, and you will at length be enabled to bear testimony that not one good thing that ever He spoke has failed. You are called to cast yourself and all your burden upon the person of the God-man—“*the bottom of fine gold*”—of the chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He is a “tried stone”—a “precious corner-stone”—a “sure foundation.” He has almighty power and unfailing strength to sustain and bear you up. He has all tender compassion to

undertake for the heavy laden, and the helpless and the oppressed. You may rest upon Him with assured confidence. He can and will bear His people and their burdens too. Your whole strength and support lie in resting on the person of the Redeemer. Casting your burden on the Lord, He will sustain you—rolling all your care upon Him, He will care for you. The foundation of all your hope cannot be shaken—the Rock of your salvation will never be removed. United to Christ, you are one with Him ; and amid all changes and revolutions, you may rest in firm trust upon the gracious assurance—“The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”

Above all, you should rest and repose on the *love of the covenant*—the lining of this royal chariot. This holy ordinance is a “feast of love.” Every part of the provision is designed to set forth and commend to us the greatness and transcendent value of the love that originated the contrivance of the covenant, and that shines illustriously in its administration. The gift of the Saviour and salvation through Him was from the sovereign, eternal love of Jehovah. The Saviour is Himself love embodied. The noon-tide effulgence of His love was seen in His sufferings and death. “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood . . . be glory and dominion,” etc. The application of redemption is His “people’s time of love ;” and every blessing He confers, and every trial He sends, is the designed expression to them of His great and unchangeable affection. All dispensations from the throne, encircled with the rainbow of the covenant, begin and end in love. At this sacramental feast, our chief concern should be to come to the *heart* of the covenant—the midst of the chariot—“paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem.” By this should we be attracted. On this we may repose with full and joyful confidence. Hence flow all the blessings which we can possibly enjoy. Rejoicing in Christ Jesus, as our best and only Beloved, we should seek now to “comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.”

Again, you should consider the greatness of the privilege of *having fellowship with Christ in the covenant*. This is the

royal chariot of your exalted King, into which He takes His redeemed, to enjoy familiar intercourse with Him, and to distinguish them with special tokens of His love and friendship. It is their safe and honourable conveyance through the wilderness, and over the river of death, to eternal bliss. Can you have any honour to be compared with this? How blessed the communion with Christ and the saints which becomes ours, when we are brought into the bond of the covenant! "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." In view of all this rich and wonderful provision, well might a dying believer exclaim—"O that blessed covenant! but for it I would be miserable, but now I am happy beyond measure."

Finally—you are under unspeakable obligations to *surrender yourselves to God in a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten*. If all this wisdom and love have been shown towards you—if such wondrous provision has been made for your safety and salvation, should you not yield yourselves wholly and for ever to be the Lord's? A covenant of high privilege requires on your part an engagement to duty. You are bought with a price, and are to be in no sense your own. The great love of Christ, exhibited in the covenant, should constrain you henceforth to live, not to yourselves, but to Him who gave Himself for you. In view of the symbols of His love, and by sanctions the most sacred, pledge yourselves anew to all holy obedience. To show forth the honour and glory of your King should be your great and constant end. You should always act as a covenant people. In the grace and strength of the New Covenant, you may engage to the performance of the most arduous service. What you are commanded to do, your gracious Master has promised to work in you and for you. You will be ever safe, and honoured and blessed in His service. His righteousness will cover you. His promise cannot fail. His love will continue unchanged to the end. His grace will ever be sufficient for you, and His strength be perfected in your weakness. Taken to be with the King in the bond and fellowship of the covenant, He will conduct you through all life's labours, and trials, and conflicts—guide you to death—and bring you in His chariot of salvation to be with Him in His everlasting kingdom of glory.

No. 7.

"And it came to pass, as they departed from Him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here," etc., etc.—LUKE xx. 33.

Communicants! Assembled as we are on the mount of communion, we remind you of a meeting with the Master of this feast in the days of His flesh, and of the lofty intercourse which He had with chosen disciples from earth, and with saints made perfect from heaven. It was the Transfiguration scene, in which there was displayed, in attractive lustre, His glory, and in which the mental frame and feelings of His disciples were fully unfolded. It was a scene of surpassing wonder, revealing the most momentous truths—fraught with lessons of the most weighty instruction to the church to the end of time.

Shortly before the Saviour's last sufferings, and as a designed preparation for them, to remove the offence of the cross, He took up to "a mountain apart," three chosen disciples. Two heavenly visitants came down from the abodes of bliss, to do honour to their incarnate Maker. "As He prayed, He was transfigured." His countenance shone with the effulgent brightness of the sun, and His "raiment became white and glistening." The beams of His divine glory penetrated the thin veil of His humanity, and enveloped the mount with a flood of dazzling splendour. In this—the most august assembly ever convened on earth, the subject of discourse was befitting the solemn occasion. Moses and Elias spoke with the Saviour of that which forms the crisis of this world's history—the meritorious cause of human redemption. The "decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem" is the subject of our believing commemoration this day—worthy to engross all our thoughts, and to absorb our wrapt affections. As the favoured disciples awoke to imperfect consciousness of their position—beheld the wondrous glory, recognized the heavenly visitants, and heard their words, Peter, speaking for himself and for the others, exclaimed—"Master, it is good to be here;" and wishing that the scene should be continued, he added—"Let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Whatever darkness of mind and confusion of thought were displayed in this utterance, it was the outflow of a heart deeply impressed—drawn by fervent love to the

Saviour, and delight in the honour and comely majesty with which He was invested, and eagerly desirous of enjoying prolonged fellowship with Christ, and saints made perfect, above all earthly enjoyment.

The express record of the disciples awaking, and seeing the glory, is the clear proof that the transfiguration was no dream or vision of the imagination, but a reality. Peter and his fellow-disciples uttered the self-conscious feeling of their hearts when they said—" *It is good to be here.*" As they beheld the celestial glory suffused on the mountain top, turning the darkness of night into noon-tide radiance, as they saw their Lord's changed appearance, and knew who were the heavenly ones, and listened to their unusual discourse; their delighted senses, and the inmost thoughts of their hearts testified that this was a scene of the most exalted privilege. The *place*—withdrawn from ordinary earthly scenes, where a purer atmosphere was inhaled, and bright sights above and around filled the field of vision, was good above all other. The wilderness and its trials had receded from the view; and on the summit of the mount, they stood at the verge of the heavenly glory, and enjoyed its foretaste and earnest. The *discoveries of their Master's glory*, with which they were favoured, rendered it especially good to be there. These surpassed in clearness and fulness all previous manifestations. The self-emptying which He had assumed was now exchanged for the visible display of His divinity. He stood forth, "fairer than the sons of men," "chiefest among ten thousand," and "altogether lovely." They beheld "the King in His beauty"—in every aspect to inspire admiration, to attract and delight the soul. Then, the *company and converse* constrained them still further to testify, "It is good to be here." Near to their Master, to whom their eyes and hearts were irresistibly drawn, stood eminent saints, come from the abodes of bliss—of whom they had often before heard, and who were fully made known to them by the revelation of His glory. They heard in their converse words that, though strange, must have delighted their ears, and filled their hearts with wonder and joy. As they spoke of divine counsels and prophecies fulfilled in the Saviour's death—of the love displayed in voluntarily submitting to it—of the amazing nature and wide extent of the blessings that would result from it, and especially of the revenue of glory that would accrue to all the persons of the God-head—as they presented to the mind of the Redeemer

considerations to animate Him, and carry Him through His approaching conflict, and delivered up to Him the seals of the office which they had held on earth, proclaiming Him the great and only lawgiver and prophet of the church—all these would impress their minds—and fill to overflowing their hearts with astonishment and gladness. In all respects, and in a measure hitherto unfelt and unknown, it was good to be there. Good for all their external senses—good for their mental faculties and spiritual powers. It was good for their knowledge—for their faith—for their love, their holiness, and comfort, and joy. They were satisfied with the Saviour's likeness, as they saw His face in righteousness. Theirs was a delighted rest and repose of the soul; and for the time, they were given to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Communicants! To a like scene of gracious manifestation you are this day called, when you have been led up to the mount of privilege. The same precious Saviour is displayed here in the glory of divine perfection, and in the excellence of His mediatorial character. The decease which He accomplished at Jerusalem has taken place. His atonement is finished, and by faith we can behold Him in His ascension, and regal dignity in heaven. We can see unfolded in a clearer light the purposes accomplished by His death, than was known to Moses and Elias as they appeared on the mount. He who has prepared this sacramental feast, and has led His people up to a scene of exalted privilege, has guaranteed His gracious presence in the ordinance. His servants are invited to draw near to behold the surpassing glory of His person and offices—of His condescending grace and love. You are here come to fellowship with holy angels and with the spirits of just men made perfect—and to communion with saints, the excellent ones of the earth. You may hear the words of the Saviour, whom they love and admire; and as they speak to Him in prayer and praise, and converse with one another about His sufferings and glory, your hearts should glow with holy fervour, and yield sweet meditations. In the possession of such high and distinguishing privilege, it behoves you to declare—It is good to be here. You are now separated from the world, and raised above all that would disturb or annoy. Your spiritual desires have been realized—your prayers answered. Faith, the evidence of things not seen—the substance of things hoped for, has attained its clearest vision.

You are called to joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom you now receive the atonement. Like Peter and his fellow-apostles, you should declare it to Christ Himself. You are welcome to taste and see that He is good—and to exclaim, as you consider His favour to objects so unworthy—"How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!" This is no common bounty. It is covenant-goodness—purchased benefits—all spiritual blessings in heavenly places with Christ. Do you earnestly desire this wondrous provision? Are you satisfied with the company of saints on earth, and of the ransomed in heaven? Do you prefer a day in God's courts to a thousand spent elsewhere—and desire this one thing of the Lord—to dwell perpetually in His house, to behold His beauty, and inquire in His temple? Does the glory of the transfiguration-scene enchain your thoughts—satisfy the highest desires of your hearts, and fill your souls with unutterable delight? Then are you welcome to the enjoyment of this blessed privilege—and as you appropriate it, we pray that you may know above all former privileges that it is indeed "good to be here."

2. (After partaking). Communicants! Brought now to the provision of God's house, you should seek to realize *largely the blessing of being here*. Like the chosen disciples, you should be concerned to feel and testify—"We were with Him in the holy mount." Himself has brought you to the banqueting-house. The King has taken you into the chambers of His love. His design in choosing you, and causing you to approach to Him, is to satisfy you with the goodness of His temple." He is now very near you—His glory is shed around you, that you may take in its rich and wonderful discoveries. The stores of his covenant-love are laid open, that you may appropriate them for the supply of every want. There is nothing *but goodness* diversified and inexhaustible here. You do Him the highest honour by drawing out of it all that you require. "Open your mouth wide, and He will fill it. The "longing soul He will satisfy—the hungry soul He will fill abundantly."

2.) If you experience that it is good to be here with Jesus and His saints, you cannot but eagerly desire to *have the spiritual enjoyment protracted and perpetuated*. The proposal of Peter—"Let us make three tabernacles"—though inconsiderate, discovered real love to Christ, and a high value

set upon special religious privileges. He preferred the request to the Master, not for himself alone, but for fellow-disciples too—"Let *us* make." It expressed the desire to have the presence of the Redeemer abiding, and the delightful vision of His glory permanent. It was the expressed desire, too, to enjoy more familiar intercourse with saints from heaven, and to know more of their converse with the Saviour concerning the nature and results of His death. Yet in the eager desire for this enjoyment, it was overlooked that the Saviour's sufferings and death were yet to be endured; the condition of the disciples who had been left at the foot of the mount was forgotten; and the work and trials allotted to themselves not duly considered. The saints from heaven came on a brief and important errand, and when it was accomplished, they might not stay. The Saviour was to descend from the mount to suffer and die, and they were to return to their fellow-disciples, to be joined with them in work and warfare—necessary and all-important for themselves and for the church, in all coming time. Thus you, too, communicants, while you cannot but desire to have fellowship with Jesus and the saints protracted, are not allowed to erect tabernacles for a perpetual abode. You must return to the world, and go down to labour and suffer. You are always to be reminded that here you "have no continuing city," and that you are to "seek one to come." If you would have a permanent abode of happiness, you must look higher than the highest scene of joy on earth—even to the mount, where the Lamb stands, surrounded by myriads of ransomed ones, beholding and reflecting His glory. But you should go down greatly better for having been with Jesus and fellow-saints "on the holy mount," impressed more than you have hitherto been with the sense of His dignity and excellency, and with your obligations to be wholly His, and having clearer views of the atoning death of Christ, and the future glory of the saints. You will go to wait continually for His second coming and appearance, and to know the honour and privilege of working for Christ, and enduring affliction for His name's sake.

3.) It is noteworthy that no reply was made to Peter's proposal, to construct tabernacles for a permanent abode upon the mount. Instead of this, it is recorded—"While he yet spake, there came a cloud and overshadowed them, and they feared as they entered into the cloud." Our Lord's silence was

significant and instructive. It showed that He had overlooked the weakness of His chosen disciples, while He accepted the expression of their faith and love. It tells that scenes of bright discovery and of lofty communion on earth are but transitory ; and it indicates that clouds and darkness often here succeed seasons of highest privilege. The cloud was the chosen symbol of the divine presence. Not as at the giving of the law, it was "*bright*," holding forth the fulness of gospel privileges and hopes. It "*overshadowed them*" in condescension and love, as a covering to diminish the splendour of the radiant glory, and reveal divine mysteries, as they were able to bear. The overshadowing cloud, coming suddenly, showed that their proposal was vain ; but it declared, too, that the substantial spiritual glory would be abiding. Like the glory that of old rested on the mercy-seat, and filled the tabernacle, without presenting any similitude or bodily shape, it symbolized the immediate gracious presence of God. This it was—the sense of a present Deity—that filled them with holy dread as they entered into the cloud that closed around them. It is a like sense of the divine peculiar presence that should fill your hearts now, communicants, and that will hereafter inspire you with holy awe and reverence, as you realize communion with God, or find Him near when you are called to walk in darkness, or exposed to affliction and suffering, in life, and at death.

4.) The "*voice*" that came out of the cloud—that of the eternal Father speaking from the excellent glory, is addressed to you. It was not spoken in the loud thunder, or in the stormy wind, or the bursting earthquake. It was "*the still small voice*" that spake peace, and conveyed strong consolation—"*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him.*" This declared the great gospel mystery—Jesus a divine Saviour—God's eternal Son—Immanuel, God with us—God manifest in the flesh. He is the only begotten of the Father—His beloved Son, in whom His infinite love is centred and embodied. So should the supreme affection of our hearts rest on Him, as our best and only Beloved. In Him and His work the Father is ever "*well pleased*." He has ineffable delight in Him as a Person of the Godhead—His work has been accepted. God is in Christ, reconciled and reconciling the world unto Himself. He cannot but be well pleased with all who accept Christ, and take refuge under His

atoning blood. Their persons and services, however unworthy, are ever "a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour" in His sight. Our grand gospel duty and privilege is here—to believe, love and obey this voice, speaking from the excellent glory. We should hear it now, while assembled here, in a peculiar manner—"Which voice we heard when we were with Him in the holy mount." It speaks to the heart, and we should welcome it, with joy and delight, as "the voice of our Beloved." It concerns us to hear Jesus alone—and all other voices—our own and those of others—should for the time be unheard. Our whole duty and privilege consist in hearing the voice of the Beloved Son of God. We should hear Him as the Great Prophet and Teacher of the covenant speaking precious promises, and giving divine instructions. We should hear Him as our Lawgiver and King, enacting laws and ordinances, and giving authoritative precepts, and as the Lord from heaven, revealing our future bright and blessed hopes. It is demanded that we should give earnest heed when He speaks, and hear Him alone. We should say, with fervent desire of heart—"Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." While seated at His table, you should hear Him now speaking to your heart some special promise, that you can appropriate and claim as yours. You should ask in prayer—"Lord, teach me Thy precepts." Our whole duty in life is ever to hear, believe, love, and obey the voice of God's Beloved Son. Thus will our doubts be silenced and fears scattered. Thus will we have safe and sure guidance through life—have abounding comfort in all trials; and at death, the voice of the Well-beloved spoken to the heart, will impart peace and triumph, as it calls—"Come up hither;" "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

5.) The close of this wondrous scene of privilege is to you, communicants, as the transfiguration-manifestation was to the favoured apostles. It is fraught with instruction and comfort. When they were afraid, "*Jesus touched them, raised them up, and said, be not afraid,*" and it is declared—"they saw no man, save Jesus only" (Matt. xvii. 7, 8). This was to them a sweet, most refreshing conclusion of the manifestation upon the mount. Christ Jesus—their exalted Master—in His love and condescension, tarried with them, when Moses and Elias had taken their departure—and when the bright rays of His dazzling glory had faded from their view, He Himself remained with them. Even so, communicants! the most profitable and

consoling close of this communion service will be to find you *alone with Jesus*. Go hence to some secret place ; spread out before Him your vows ; realize His presence ; and commit yourselves to Him. For all the future, let your resolution and motto be “**JESUS ONLY.**” He will be with you through life. He will remain to the last, as you have seen Him on the mount of privilege—“Jesus, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” This will be your support, and comfort, and joy, at a dying hour—Jesus alone, near you, sustaining you, when the flesh and heart are fainting and failing ;—and receiving you to Himself—to be with Him for ever, will complete the full measure of your felicity.

Finally—As we separate from this scene of holy privilege, should we not be reminded *how glorious is the heaven to which the redeemed are travelling, and be led to set our affections on things above?* The mount of transfiguration was, for the time, heaven let down to earth ; and its bright radiance was a glimpse of the glory of the revealed. There the redeemed see Jesus as He is—in all the revealed mystery of His love, in all the splendour of His exaltation, and through Him they have the beatific vision of the unseen Godhead. They have, too, the highest fellowship with holy angels, and see not only Moses and Elias, and prophets, apostles, and martyrs, but the whole innumerable multitude of glorified saints, and those especially with whom they had the most endeared communion on earth. In heaven there will be no more drowsiness or confused thought—no more cloud or fear. The ransomed brought home to glory will speak no more of coming sufferings and death, whether of the Saviour or of His people. The death on Calvary will be spoken of as long since accomplished, and will be celebrated with adoring gratitude and praise. Their own sufferings and death will be told to one another—with gratitude to Him who sustained and delivered them—and on account of the great benefits that have resulted from them. They will speak of their sins, and failings, and sorrows on earth, with tenderness, but without a tear ; for God has wiped away all tears for ever ; “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying—neither any more pain, for the former things have passed away.” They will be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. With ecstatic wonder and delight, they will exclaim, as they stand in the immediate presence of the Lamb as it had been slain—“Master, it is good to be

here ;" and this will be the prevailing feeling of their hearts, and their frequent utterance, in their lofty communion with each other. No longer will they need to make tabernacles in order to protract their communion with God and fellow-saints, and to render their bliss permanent. They have come to the "many mansions" in the Father's house—the place which the ascended Redeemer has prepared for them. They can go no more out. Throughout eternal ages, they will be with the Lord—to enjoy heaven and blessedness, vastly transcending the highest privileges of the most favoured communion on earth. As you go hence, may you carry with you this assured hope, till you bid farewell to earth and its changing scenes and come at length to its blessed fruition !

Note added, p. 282.

J. A. FROUDE, the historian, in his new volume of "*Short Studies on Great Subjects*," thus speaks of the "*Revival of Romanism*" in England :—

"Forty years ago, a knot of Oxford students, looking into the constitution of the Church of England, discovered principles which, as they imagined, had only to be acted on to restore religion to the throne of the empire. With no historical insight into the causes which had left these peculiar forms in the stratification of the church, like fossils of an earlier age, they conceived that the secret of the church's strength lay in the priesthood and the sacraments ; and that the neglect of them was the explanation of its weakness. The Church of England so renovated would rise, they thought, like Achilles from his tent : clad in celestial armour, it would put to flight the armies of infidelity, and bring back, in a modern shape, adapted to modern creeds, the era of Hildebrand and Becket. They, and only they, stood on ground from which they could successfully encounter atheism ! They, and they only, as tracing their lineage through imposition of hands to the apostles, could meet and vanquish the pretensions of Rome !

"Singular imagination ! The battle which ensued is not yet over, but the issue of it has long ceased to be uncertain. Of the conflict with Materialism, these gentlemen made less than the evangelicals made. Materialism is sweeping over the intellect of the age like a spring tide, continually on the rise. They did not conquer Rome. The ablest of them, after all their passionate denials were the first to see that if their principles were sound, the Reformation had been a crime ; and that they must sue for admission into the bosom of their true mother. They submitted ; they were received ; they and the many who have followed them, have been the most energetic knights of that holy war ; they have been the most accomplished libellers of the institution in which they were born. The Anglican regiment, which pretended to be the most effective against the enemy in the whole Protestant army, is precisely

the one which had, and still furnishes to that enemy, the most venomous foes of the English Church, and the largest supply of deserters.

"What these gentlemen have really accomplished is the destruction of the evangelical party in the Established Church. While the most vigorous of the Anglo-Catholics have gone over to the Papacy, the rest have infected almost the entire body of the Episcopal clergy with principles which seem to add to their personal consequence. *The youngest curate affects the airs of a priest. He receives a counterfeit of the sacramental system, in which he pretends to have a passionate belief. He decorates his altar after the Roman pattern; he invites the ladies of his congregation to confess to him, and whispers his absolution; and having led them away from their old moorings, and filled them with aspirations which he is unable to gratify, he passes them on in ever-gathering members to the hands of the genuine Roman, who waits to receive them.* The Episcopal Church of England, with its collateral branches in this and other countries, no longer lends strength to the cause of Protestantism. It is the enemy's chief depot and recruiting ground."

WORKS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Believing that it may be of use to some of the readers of this Treatise to be informed of works, ancient and modern, that furnish information on the various subjects which have been discussed, or that treat more or less fully on the sacraments of the church, we subjoin a list of authors that have been referred to and consulted. A fuller catalogue might have been given; but the works mentioned will, it is believed, supply sufficient matter of study for those who wish to investigate the subject of the sacrament, and especially of the Lord's Supper—in their doctrinal, controversial, and practical aspects.

Augustine's Works.—Treatises on the Sacraments and Lord's Supper. These are referred to in Bingham's "Antiquities of the Christian Church," B. xiv., cap. i., sec. 17. Augustine's Works are now published in English, in 16 vols., by Messrs T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.

Justin Martyr—Irenæus—Clemens Alexandrinus—Cyprian, etc.—The views of these Christian Fathers, in relation to the Sacraments, and to different subjects connected with the Supper, may be fully ascertained by consulting their works in English, as they are found in the series of "The Ante-Nicene Fathers," published by Messrs T. & T. Clark, in their "Foreign Theological Library." Condensed statements of their sentiments on the Supper are given in Bingham's and Coleman's Antiquities.

Apostolical Constitutions.—The account which these give of early and superstitious usages in the celebration of the Supper, is found detailed in Bingham and Coleman.

Moses and Aaron.—Civil and Ecclesiastical Rites used by the Ancient Hebrews, by Thomas Godwin, D.D., Rector of Brightwell, in Berkshire. (See Horne's Introduction.)

Jenning's Jewish Antiquities ; or, a Course of Lectures on the Three First Books of Godwin's Moses and Aaron.—These are much fuller than Godwin, and occasionally differ from him.

Origines Ecclesiasticæ ; or, the Antiquities of the Christian Church, by Joseph Bingham, 2 vols. 8vo.

Archæologia Biblica.—A Manual of Biblical Antiquities, by John Jahn, D.D., Professor of Oriental Languages, of Biblical Antiquities, and Theology, in the University of Vienna. Translated by T. C. Upham. The work is almost exclusively occupied with Jewish Antiquities.

Neander's General Church History, and his History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles—Supplies much valuable information respecting the doctrine and observance of the Lord's Supper in primitive times.

The Antiquities of the Christian Church—by Rev. Lyman Coleman (America). A cheap edition of this work was issued by Ward & Co., London.

REFORMERS, CONFESSORS, AND THEOLOGIANS OF THE
REFORMED CHURCHES.

Calvin's Works.—Calvin Translation Society—"Institutes," B. iv. The Sacraments—Lord's Supper.

Institutio Theologiae Elencticæ—Fra-Turretino—Pars Tertia—sec. xix. De Sacramentis—Quest. xxi.-xxvi. De Sacra Cœna, Quest. sec. xxvii., xxviii. De Transubstantione—Quest xxix. De Sacrificio Missatico.

Theoretico-Practica Theologia—Pet. Von Maestricht, Tom. ii., cap. iii.—vi. De Sacr. Eccles.

This contains a very full and exhaustive discussion of the nature, ends, and administration of the sacraments. The subject is handled doctrinally, practically, and controversially. The Romish doctrine of Transubstantiation and of the Mass is ably exposed and refuted. The various Scripture passages that speak of the Lord's Supper are clearly expounded and applied.

Synopsis Purioris Theologiæ.—Disput. xlivi. De Sacram. in gener.—Rivet, xlv. De Cœna Domini—D. An. Thysium, xlvi.—De Missa—Polyander.

Confessions of the Different Continental Churches—Lutheran and Reformed.

Expository Lectures on the Hidelberg Catechism, 2 vols.—Geo. C. Bethune, D.D.; New York, vol. ii., Lec. xxxi. Faith from the Holy Ghost through the Word and the Sacraments, Lecs. xxxv.—xxxvii. The Lord's Supper—Transubstantiation, Lec. xxxviii.

Institutiones Theologicæ.—Horenbeek, cap. xv. De Sacr., sec. xix.—xxxiv. De Cœna Sacra—et Missa.

Charnock's Works—Vols. ii. and iv.—Discourses on the Ends—Subjects—Unworthy Receiving. The Discourses which follow in this volume on Self-Examination—the Knowledge of Christ Crucified—Christ our Passover—and the Voluntariness and Acceptableness of Christ's Death, are most suitable for preparation for commemorating in the ordinance of the Supper.

Twenty-five Discourses suitable to the Lord's Supper, by John Owen, D.D. In vol. ix. of Dr Owen's Works, edited by Dr Goold. Though these Discourses are a posthumous publication, consisting of notes taken from the author's addresses, and not having the benefit of his revision, they contain many pious reflections, and much valuable instruction.

The Economy of the Covenants, by Herman Witsius, D.D., 2 vols. 8vo. The part which treats of the Sacraments and the Lord's Supper, vol. ii., contains, in a brief space, much important matter, and is eminently suggestive.

An Apology for the True Christian Divinity, by Robert Barclay. This work, which was published in 1675, is regarded by the Quakers, or Society of Friends, as among the fullest and ablest exhibitions and defences of their views in relation to Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Observations on the Religious Peculiarities of the Friends, by Joseph B. Gurney.

Letters on Frequent Communion, by John M. Mason, D.D., New York.

The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, illustrated,—with a view to explain its nature, to point out its practical influence, and to establish its obligation, by William Orme. Although, on various points, we differ from the sentiments advanced in this treatise, yet we highly esteem it as a scholarly and able work, and in some parts presenting, in lucid and eloquent terms, beautiful and attractive views of the ordinance.

An Attempt to Ascertain and Illustrate the Authority, Nature, and Design of the Lord's Supper, by the Rev. C. Bell, D.D.; 8vo, published, London, 1780. This work is now scarce.

Mr Orme thus characterizes it, "Very valuable for its scriptural and critical observations on a variety of points."

The Sacraments—An Inquiry into the Nature of the Symbolic Institutions of the Christian Religion, usually called The Sacraments, by Robert Halley, D.D. This work, which was the Congregational Lecture for 1841, after discussing at some length the subject of the sacraments, treats principally on baptism, in its various aspects. It is a very scholarly production, containing much incisive criticism on the views and reasoning of the late Dr Carson, and other Baptist writers.

A Treatise on the Lord's Supper, by the Rev. Edward Bickersteth—12mo. This work, which is throughout evangelical and practical, has passed through many editions, being deservedly popular with the evangelical section of the Church of England. Though defective in some views of the ordinance of the Supper, it is calculated to be useful as a Directory for its devout observance.

The Lord's Supper—12mo, pp. 300, Edin. 1846, by Rev. David King, LL.D.

This is a well-written, scholarly treatise, presenting, in a condensed form, and in lucid terms, the scriptural doctrine of the Supper, with important practical instructions respecting its observance. It contains, besides, valuable information concerning the views of various authors, ancient and modern, on the Supper.

The Nature, Obligation, and Efficacy of the Christian Sacra-
ments, considered, by Daniel Waterland, D.D.

A Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist, as laid down in
Scripture and Antiquity, by Waterland.

The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation, by W.
Cunningham, D.D.—(Zwingle and the Doctrine of the
Sacraments, pp. 212-292.)

Historical Theology, by W. Cunningham, D.D., vol. ii., p.
121-144.

Systematic Theology, by Charles Hodge, D.D., vol. iii., c. xx., sec. 2-7. The Sacraments, pp. 490-523, Sec. 15.—The Lord's Supper, pp. 611-692.

Practical Works of the Rev. John Willison, 4to—W. Mackenzie. A Sacramental Directory—Sacramental Meditations and Advices—A Sacramental Catechism—The Young Communicant's Catechism.

 These works of Willison on the Lord's Supper, which are eminently scriptural and practical, were in former times much read by members of the Presbyterian Church in these countries, and were much employed in the instruction of the youth of Presbyterian families. They have largely contributed to the inculcation of correct scriptural sentiments regarding the ordinance, and been instrumental in nourishing genuine piety throughout the church.

Devotional and Practical Works of the Rev. M. Henry, 4to—W. Mackenzie, Glasgow.—The Communicant's Companion; or, Instructions for the Right Receiving of the Lord's Supper.

This treatise is distinguished by the marked characteristics of the writings of the venerable author. It is scriptural, evangelical, and pervaded with spiritual unction. To Christians, who peruse it in a right frame of spirit, it will minister much suitable light and comfort, in relation to preparing for partaking the Lord's Supper, to the act of communicating, to the due improvement afterwards, and the benefits resulting from its right observance.

Priesthood in the Light of the New Testament—The Congregational Union Lecture for 1876, by E. Mellor, D.D. Lectures v. and vi. contain a full and able exposure of the Errors of the Church of Rome—on Transubstantiation and the Mass, and of the doctrines of Ritualists in the English Church on the Altar, the Priesthood, and Real Presence in the Lord's Supper.

Sacramental Instruction, by the Rev. C. Bridges, M.A.

This little work, by the venerable author of the "Treatise on the Christian Ministry," and "Expositions of the Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm"—the "Proverbs" and "Ecclesiastes"—is scriptural and evangelical in sentiment, and, like all his other works, is practical, and pervaded by spiritual unction. A principal design of its publication was to expose and refute the semi-papal doctrines of the Tractarian party in the National Church of England. In a few instances, it presents but a lame defence of the unscriptural statements of the Church Prayer-Book, Articles, and Catechism, on the Sacraments, especially of Baptism ; yet it contains, in a condensed form, much valuable information in relation to the views of the English Reformers and Martyrs on the sacraments, and offers important and practical instructions regarding the duties required of Christians at the present season of innovation and laxity of doctrine and practice.

Sacraments and Sacramental Exhortations, by Andrew Thomson, D.D., Edinburgh.

Sermons to Young Persons, by Philip Doddridge, D.D.—The fourth discourse in this little volume which has the title—"The young Christian invited to an early attendance on the Lord's Table," may be suitably put by parents and ministers into the hands of the baptized youth of the church, with the view of leading them early to make a public profession of religion.

Discourses suited to the Administration of the Lord's Supper, by John Brown, D.D., Edinburgh. These discourses, together with those by the author that treat of the Saviour's last sufferings, and those on the seventeenth chapter of John, are eminently fitted to impart instruction, elevate the thoughts, and prepare the hearts of ministers and members for the right observance for the sacrament of the Supper. The Tractate by Dr Brown, on the "Permanent Obligation and Frequent Observance of the Lord's Supper," is now scarce, but it deserves to be generally known.

The Lord's Supper.—A Treatise founded on 1 Corinthians xi.
23-31, by the Rev. James Morgan, D.D., Belfast.

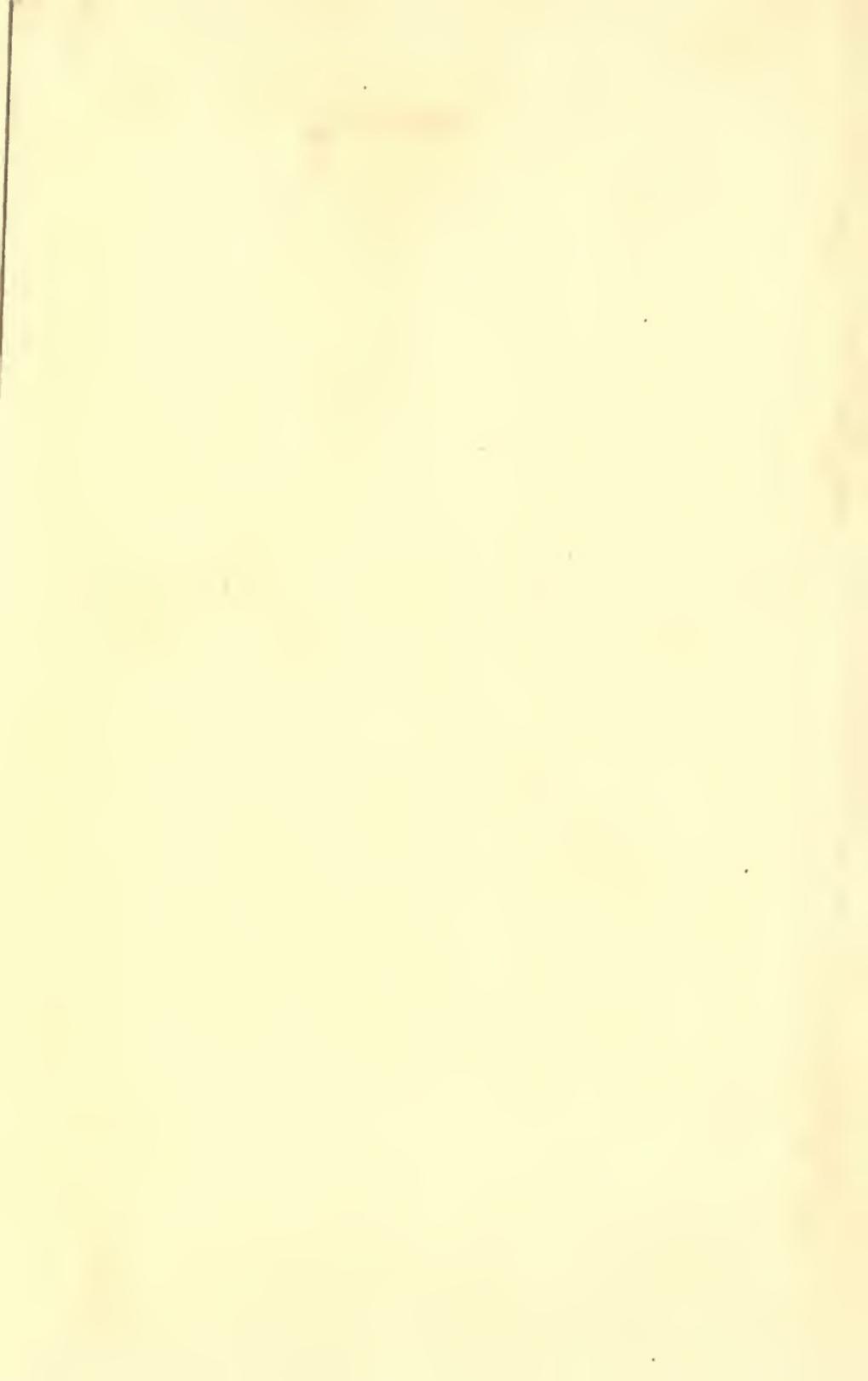
This is a plain, evangelical, and practical treatise on the Lord's Supper, in which much stress is laid upon the connection of the ordinance with the covenant of grace, and the obligations to observe it; the sin of communicating unworthily is shown at length, and plain and pointed directions are given in relation to due preparation for communicating, and to the duties required afterwards. The appendix, extending to some ninety pages, contains a considerable number of exercises of self-examination before observing the Lord's Supper; others suitable in the prospect of communicating—after partaking—a synopsis of instruction on the Lord's Supper—and a specimen of questions addressed to candidates for fellowship in the church.

THE END.











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